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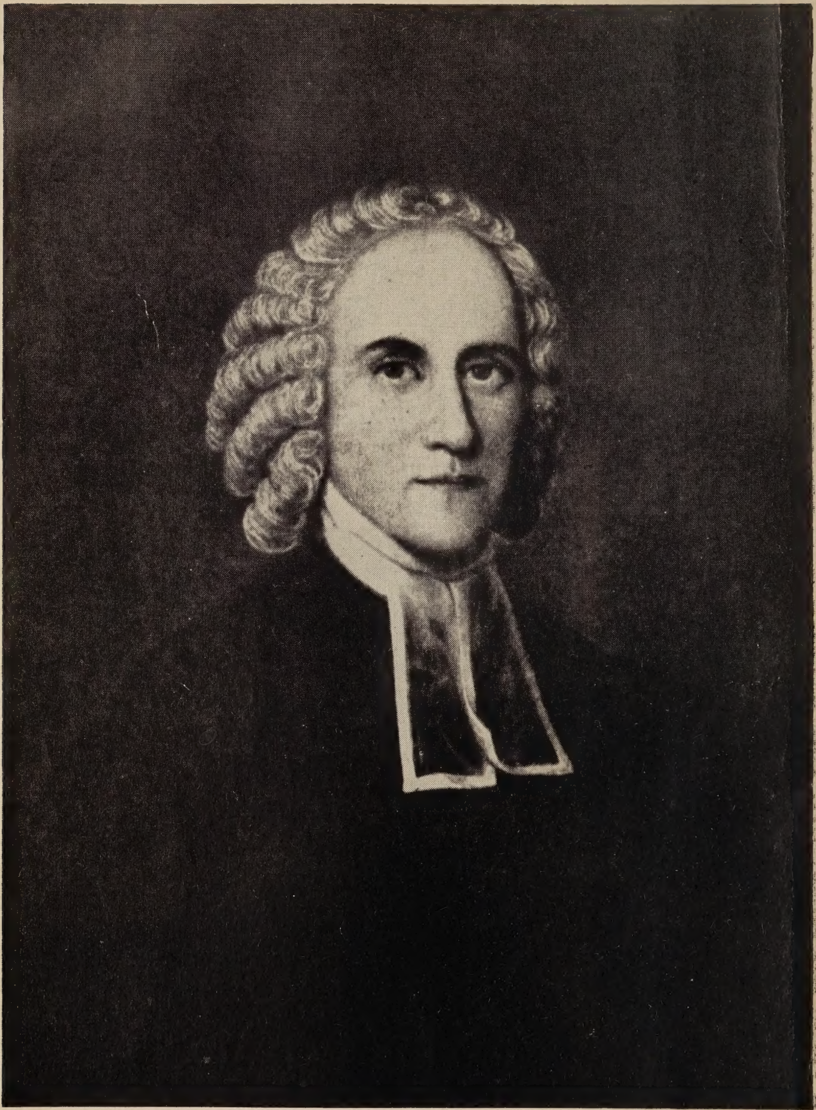

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JONATHAN EDWARDS

# JONATHAN EDWARDS

## *The Fiery Puritan*

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By

HENRY BAMFORD PARKES

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TO

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# PROLOGUE

# THE HAND OF AN ANGRY GOD

# JONATHAN EDWARDS

## PROLOGUE

### THE HAND OF AN ANGRY GOD

IT was 1741. A corpulent German, with a corpulent German mistress, was king of England, to maintain the rights of property and keep out the popish pretender; the whig lords ruled the kingdom, and Sir Robert Walpole had just been driven from office; William Pitt was a young politician who seemed to be using patriotism as a cloak for private ambition; there was a maritime war with Spain, which was grossly mismanaged. The king of France, young and popular, was expected to rival the exploits of his predecessor; the Pompadour and the Parc aux Cerfs, the bread-riots, the bankruptcy, and the revolution were all in the future; the rights of man were a myth, and democracy not even a dream. A young fop, who had become king of Prussia, had used his father's grenadiers to steal Silesia from the heiress of the Hapsburgs, and was defending it furiously against the Austrian field-marshals; the war threatened to involve England and France.

Locke, with his theory that all ideas were acquired from sensation, was the reigning philosopher; and Newton's vision of a law-ordered universe had permeated the intellectual consciousness of Europe; Halley was astronomerroyal; the movements of planets and stars were being recorded; and incredible occurrences were gravely reported and ascribed to causes still more incredible, which none the less made a show of being scientific. Meanwhile travelers rode on horseback because the roads were too bad for carriages; and washing was avoided because water was bad for the skin. Medicine was an affair of fantastic animal remedies—human excrement and the sperm of frogs—whose effects were described in pseudo-scientific jargon; half the children that were born died within a few months of birth, and a pock-marked face was the most familiar of sights; of the deaths in the city of London thirty per cent were ascribed to convulsions, and five per cent to pains in the teeth.

Nine-tenths of the world's population was static, and employed on the soil. They believed in witchcraft, the magical power of charms, the baleful effect of comets, and a supernatural power who, if duly propitiated, would give good harvests. The idea that government existed for the good of the people was a rare and novel heresy.

The intellectual revolution had scarcely begun. Voltaire was living with his Emily in Brussels, and known as a dramatist and an admirer of the English constitution; Montesquieu was working on "L'Esprit des Lois" in his great study at La Brède; Diderot was a bookseller's hack; a vagabond tutor from Geneva, called Rousseau, was trying to make a name for himself in Paris as a musician.

The Church of England was a moribund appanage of the aristocracy. High society was indifferent, and culture was deist; it was thought best that the common people should be superstitious. A group of hypocrites and enthusiastics, nicknamed the "holy club," the "bible bigots," and the "methodists," were creating a scandal; they claimed to have special revelations from heaven, preached to mobs in the open air, and filled people's minds with seditious nonsense.

Two months' voyage across the Atlantic lay a little-regarded dependency of the British crown—the colony of New England: a land notorious for strict sabbatarians and unscrupulous drivers of bargains—devoted adherents of the Protestant succession.

Along the coastline they were thriving fishermen, and merchants of the African and West-India trade. Luxury and episcopalianism had come in with the royal governors; and the upper classes were beginning to doubt whether God had really elected the majority of mankind for eternal damnation; they took religion easily, as a matter of respectable behavior and going to church on Sundays; some of them posed as deists, and scoffed at the superstition of the Pilgrim fathers. They followed the latest developments in the literature of England, and considered Addison the best of prose-writers, and Sir Richard Blackmore the greatest poet. In Boston there was a populace of seamen and workmen and negro slaves, who broke loose periodically in an orgy of drunkenness, window-smashing, and rioting. It was estimated that one-eighth of the houses in the town were either licensed taverns or illegal drinking and gambling dens.

Westward from Boston New England extended for two days' journey—a land of clergymen and small farmers. They were a vigorous hard-working stock, who got their women with child before they married them, and celebrated their festivals with prodigious drinkings of ale and cider and rum; they loved strange and rare delicacies —chocolate and oranges and Bohea tea; they guffawed heartily at anything which denoted sexual virility or the lack of it; they quarreled bitterly with each other, and went to law at the slightest provocation; they were the most obstinate of individualists. Their blood was not yet diluted by hard labor, puritanical repression, and loss of the more vigorous strains by emigration. The Indians continually imperiled their lives along the frontiers, and the wolves killed their sheep to within twenty miles of Boston. Washing was rare—except when the rivers were warm enough for the men to swim in them; and privies were unknown. Their god was an agricultural deity, and their religion a blend of Calvinist Christianity with primaeval superstition, based mostly on the pentateuch; they attended meeting, obeyed the law of Moses, and became converted, in order that Jehovah might ward off pestilences, Indians, droughts, floods, and earthquakes, and reward them with good harvests. Their ministers told them that if they did not accept God's will as their will, take Christ as their Redeemer, and become born again, they would go to hell when they died; but until 1740 hell was a cliché; only the clergy felt its reality with any vividness.

In Massachusetts Governor Belcher was expecting his recall, and the clergy were hoping that such a devout supporter of their churches might not be removed from office. There was unwonted peace with the Indians; but men watched with anxiety the latest bulletins from Europe. The scarcity of precious metal and the depreciation of the paper money had filled the lawcourts with debtors; and a scheme for remedying the shortage by founding a land-bank had been vetoed.

In 1741, however, the conversation in the taverns and at the dinner tables of ministers and colonels of militia throughout New England was not about politics. George Whitefield, the famous preacher, had swept across the country in the preceding autumn, and was still to be heard of, like a rumble of distant thunder, as he passed down the coast to his parish in Georgia. After him had come Gilbert Tennent, an Ulsterman from New Jersey, loud of voice and uncouth of gesture, clothed like John the Baptist in a greatcoat of sackcloth with a leather girdle about his loins; all winter and spring he had brandished hellfire before the Bostonians; and before he left had set the villages to the south and west ablaze with terror of the Judgment. Round Boston and New Haven there were many who scoffed; who are these creatures who spurn all decency and decorum, they inquired, telling polite citizens that they will go to hell when they die, and encouraging the mob to vulgar displays of vanity and enthusiasm; plainly they are mad; or if not mad, in the pay of the pope and the king of France. But among the common people everywhere—the dock-hands of Boston and New Haven, the fishermen along Cape Cod, the farmers in the hill-country of central New England—there was only one cry—a cry of terror: for they had been told that when they died they would be tortured for ever and ever in the unquenchable flames of hell; by their drinkings and frolickings, their dances and fornications, they had provoked Almighty God, and nothing but His arbitrary good pleasure saved them from dropping any moment into the pit of torment.

The ministers marveled that God was working so powerfully on the hearts of their parishioners; they labored tirelessly to bring men to the new birth, without which they could not be saved.

Most of the towns up the Connecticut valley had felt the revival. Springfield was ruled by an adherent of the new Arminian heresy, who kept preachers of hellfire and sudden conversion beyond his borders; but in East Windsor and Longmeadow God was mightily at work; and in Suffield there were ninety-five converts on a single day.

Enfield, lying between them, was still apathetic. So for the afternoon of July 8th a lecture was appointed, and a group of ministers took the warpath and descended upon it.

Mr. Stephen Williams, Mr. Eleazer Williams, Mr. Joseph Meachem, and Mr. Eleazer Wheelock spent the morning conducting services in dusty Longmeadow, on the bluffs above the slow-flowing Connecticut. Stephen and Eleazer Williams were sons of John Williams of Deerfield, and had been seized with him on that dreadful day twenty-six years before, when the Indians sacked his town, scalped his wife, and marched their fainting prisoners across the mountains to Quebec; among the Frenchmen their sister, Eunice, had turned papist and married an Indian; she had recently visited her brothers in Longmeadow, but all their prayers could not induce her to seek safety from hell by making her home in New England. Joseph Meachem was the husband of another sister, and the minister of Coventry. Eleazer Wheelock was the minister of Lebanon, and a great master of pulpit elocution; in this year he preached no less than four hundred and sixty sermons; he subsequently founded a mission school for the savage Indians in New Hampshire, for which a handsome donation was given him by the Earl of Dartmouth. The four revivalists dined with Mr. Reynolds, the minister of Enfield, and in the afternoon rode up to the meeting house; there they met Mr. Edwards, from Northampton, who was to preach.

The Enfield farmers came to the meeting house in their check shirts and long red coats with three dozen buttons, and their wives in their Sunday dresses that had been handed down for generations. When the ministers filed into the building they were shocked by the levity of the congregation; they appeared thoughtless and vain, and hardly conducted themselves with common decency.

Mr. Edwards was over six feet tall, with a high forehead and a long narrow face; his expression was sweet and rather feminine; he was very thin, from continuous study; he wore, as was customary, a white wig, and a black gown, and was clothed beneath his gown in a coat and breeches of black broadcloth. He used no gestures, but stood motionless, with his eyes fixed on the bell-rope straight in front of him, his left elbow leaning on the cushion and his left hand holding his notes; his voice was low and a little monotonous, but well-cadenced, precise, and distinct; it went on pitilessly, like the voice of God Himself. He took as his text a passage from Deuteronomy—"Their foot shall slide in due time."

Having explained the text, he went on to say that nothing kept wicked men out of hell for a single moment but the arbitrary pleasure of God; God was more angry with many men still alive—doubtless with many that were sitting at ease in that congregation—than with many who were already in hell; the devil stood ready to seize them, and their own sin was a pent-up fire which, when God permitted, would immediately turn their souls into fiery ovens or furnaces of brimstone; nothing but the pleasure of a God who hated them saved them from a sudden death at any moment of the day.

Mr. Edwards then went on to make a direct application. "There is hell's wide gaping mouth open," he said; "you have nothing to stand upon, nor any thing to take hold of; there is nothing between you and hell but the air. . . . There are black clouds of God's wrath now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm, and big with thunder; the sovereign pleasure of God, for the present, stays his rough wind; otherwise your destruction would come like a whirlwind, and you would be like the chaff of the summer threshing floor. . . . The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, is dreadfully provoked, you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours; yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment; there is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell, since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful manner of attending his solemn worship. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to burn it asunder; and you have nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do. . . . If, when once the day of mercy is past, you cry to God to pity you, he will be so far from pitying you, that he will only tread you under foot; he will crush out your blood, and make it fly, and it shall be sprinkled on his garments. . . . To your exquisite horrible misery there will be no end; when you look forward, you shall see a long for ever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all. You will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages; and then when you have so done, you will know that all is but a point to what remains. . . . This is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation now hearing this discourse, that has not been born again. . . . There is reason to think, that there are many in this congregation now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. It would be a wonder, if some that are now present should not be in hell in a very short time. And it would be no wonder if some persons, that now sit here, in some seats of this meeting-house, in health, quiet and secure, should be there before to-morrow morning."

This sermon was interrupted by outcries from the congregation; the details have not been recorded; but it must surely have been at these words that pandemonium broke loose. All over the meeting house men and women stood up and rolled on the floor, shrieking and screaming; it was like a forest smitten by a hurricane. "Oh, I am going to hell," they cried; "alas for our frolicks and our dances; how shall we remember them in hell." For many minutes the building was filled with the fearful wail of condemned souls; then they secured quiet, and Mr. Wheelock prayed, and the ministers climbed down from the pulpit. But long past sunset and through the night Enfield was like a beleaguered city; in almost every house men and women could be heard crying out for God to save them; they fancied that at any moment Christ might descend in judgment from the sky with the archangels and the apostles at his side, and the graves would give up their dead; and the little children were afraid to play, and pleaded with the Almighty to save them.

This Enfield sermon has become notorious. Many people think of Edwards only as the preacher of the most terrific hellfire sermons of which we have record.

He is, however, a figure of unique importance in the history of America. He was the father of American Puritanism: before him religion meant the propitiation of a jealous God in order to secure worldly prosperity; after him it meant disinterested obedience to the law, because the law was lovely; Edwards rescued Calvinism when it was on the verge of destruction by the scientific outlook, and made it impregnable against intellectual assaults for almost a century; he fastened upon the necks of his countrymen a Puritanism such as we know to-day.

Puritanism may seem to many of us an unlovely thing; but every great human movement has something noble at its roots; and Edwards was a great man. He was probably the first, and may also have been the last, in American history who accepted Puritanism solely because it satisfied his own psychological needs; before Edwards men became converted to secure prosperity or to escape hellfire; after him mostly because they were convinced by his faith. Edwards accepted also much that seems to us repulsive or absurd, because he failed to disentangle it from those parts of Puritanism which he needed; but from his own narrative it is plain that his conversion was not the result of fear or of conviction that was merely intellectual. He came from the same mould as the great princes of the mediaeval church; and nothing suggests that he would have found uncongenial the rôle of an Anselm or a Bernard; but some caprice of Providence condemned him to live in a New England village. And whereas the Catholic Church teaches its saints how to be indulgent to the weaknesses of the laity, Calvinism required the same self-surrender from each individual; Edwards tried to make everyone like himself; and the results of that effort are still with us.

For his victims he is a vice to be shaken off, a demon to be spat at. But for the unbiased observer he is a figure almost without spot or blemish, whose vision of the universe is of a breathtaking sublimity, and who realized certain of the possibilities of human nature so perfectly that they need never be realized again.

# BOOK ONE

# THE STUDENT

# CHAPTER I

## WINDSOR FARMES

THE Reverend Timothy Edwards, father of Jonathan, was ordained in 1694 to be the minister of Windsor Farmes, on the east side of the Connecticut River. He was the son of Richard Edwards, a rich lawyer and merchant of Hartford, whose grandfather, according to an unproved legend, had come from Wales and held a London parish in the reign of Elizabeth. Timothy's wife had been Esther Stoddard, daughter of the pastor of Northampton; her mother was the daughter of the first minister of Windsor, and her grandmother, the first of the five wives of Anthony Stoddard, had been niece of John Winthrop and sister of Sir George Downing, graduate of Harvard and sycophant of Charles II. Wealth, religion, and respectability adorned the ancestry of Jonathan Edwards for several generations. His father and mother, both his grandfathers, and two of his great-grandfathers were all people of unusual ability.

There was, however, a skeleton in the family cupboard. Richard Edwards, at the age of twenty, had been inveigled into marriage by a rich and attractive New Haven girl, Elizabeth Tuttle, who within a few months gave birth to a child whose paternity her husband disowned; after twenty years of marriage she seems to have become insane, for her husband secured a divorce; one of her sisters committed infanticide; and one of her brothers was hanged for murdering another sister; Timothy Edwards was her second child. One of Jonathan's sisters was distinctly queer, and two of his nieces became confirmed opium-eaters; his own youngest son, born too late to be educated by him, was a clever and erratic Don Juan; and one of his grandsons was Aaron Burr. The cross between Puritan solidity and the morbid brilliance of the Tuttles seems to have caused all the ability of the Edwardses, a family dear to enthusiastic eugenists.

Timothy was considered to be unusually learned; but was otherwise a normal New England parson. He was afraid of God, but he was not, according to modern notions, especially puritanical. He had a healthy appetite for brandy and rum; and when he was ordained, a dance was held at his house. The earliest Puritans had disliked dancing, partly because it was pagan in origin and therefore in all probability an invention of Satan, partly because it caused fornication; they would allow "pyrrhical or polemical saltation," and "dancing of men with men and women with women," for these had biblical precedents; but not "gynaecandrical" dancing. The prohibition, however, was little regarded, and by 1700 everybody danced except a few of the clergy and the graver laymen.

Timothy believed, like most of his contemporaries, that everything which happened in the world was arranged by a personal God; God intervened continually in the progress of events, and made known His wishes to His servants through those events which unbelieving persons called accidents. For this reason card-playing and games of chance were blasphemous; for to obey the verdict of accident was to obey the verdict of God, and people should do it, as John Cotton said, "rather prayerfully than sportfully." Lotteries, therefore, were forbidden; and playing cards, when found by police officers, were burnt. When embarking on any enterprise, the Puritans always watched carefully for the verdict of God, as expressed through such omens as climatic conditions, texts impressed on their minds, the movements of animals, and trivial accidents; and success was usually a proof of divine approval.

Timothy kept a notebook in which he recorded those occasions when God had made personal interventions to save him from death or calamity. As an infant, he had fallen into a tub of water and been miraculously saved from drowning. When he was at the grammar school in Hartford, he pulled the trigger of a loaded gun while it was aimed at a playfellow; but providentially it missed fire—a deliverance which, his father said, was worthy of a place in Mr. Mather's "Remarkable Providences." He went with his schoolmates to slide and play whiptop on a frozen river, and was narrowly saved from going through the ice. Another time a peachstone stuck in his throat; when he could not pull it out, he realized that death was close at hand, and that because he was a sinner God would not save him; but God did save him, for, while he was running down to the river to get a drink, the peach-stone miraculously came out. Once he was hanging from the top bough of a cherry tree, and, when a schoolmate told him he would break his neck, he went on hanging out of sheer bravado; nevertheless, against all probability, God did not allow the bough to break. Four times on sea-voyages to Boston he was saved from shipwreck; three times he was thrown from horses without being killed; and once, when he was on a canoe trip up "the great river" to visit his sweetheart at Northampton, he was nearly bitten by a rattlesnake. These indications that God approved of his way of living were very precious to the Reverend Timothy Edwards.

On Sundays and Thursdays he explained to his congregation the methods of the deity in governing the world, and showed how the New England churches were God's especial care. "Calamitys," he declared, "are awful signs and appearances of divine anger;" if calamities came and people did not repent, but went on disobeying the ten commandments—for by a process of construction worthy of the United States Supreme Court the Puritan ministers had interpreted the Decalogue as covering every possible variety of sin—then God became "very angry indeed"; it was "a very provoking thing," and the punishments that God was liable to inflict included "blasting and mildew, year after year, . . . unfruitfull seasons and unseasonable winds, . . . sweeping floods, and scorching parching droughts, . . . the wasting sword and graves of war, . . . mortal and contagious diseases, . . . Small pox, malignant fevers, Pleurisis and the like, . . . strifes and disagreements in our publique affayres both civill and military;" finally, and worst of all, God would "cut you short in the ordinance of his Gospell," and there would be "a kind of famine of the heart and of the word of the Lord amongst you." "Aren't these things awfull?" he concluded. Wherefore the ungodly must consider that their impenitence and disobedience brought down judgments on the land, and that to save the neighbors from calamity they must repent; moreover, "if the rest of the land should repent and turn to God in a generall way and yet you continue impenitent, you cant expect to share in the blessings of God upon them." The godly, also, must reflect that they had probably committed sins which "have offended God and doubtless made him angry;" "you, for aught you know," he told them, "may have a hand in bringing down judgements on the place where you live". God, for Timothy Edwards, was a person up in the sky, who was very jealous of His honor; blasphemy and sabbath-breaking were more offensive to God, and hence more likely to ruin the harvest, than fornication and drunkenness; for the former were direct insults, whereas the latter were merely breaches of the law which God, for reasons known only to Himself—or rather for no reason at all but His own arbitrary will—had commanded men to obey. These doctrines were expounded by Timothy from the pulpit, and doubtless impressed upon his son; they were a form of superstition which eighteenth-century science was making impossible; one of the most notable achievements of Jonathan Edwards was that he rejected them completely.

The other five days of the week Timothy worked on his farm, with intervals of visiting the sick, reproving wrongdoers, riding to ministers' meetings and college commencements, and teaching Latin and Greek to his children and to a few paying pupils. He was not, like most New England ministers, the physician of his parish, as well as its advocate with the deity. But his time was fully occupied, for he had eleven children. The Puritans noticed in their Bibles the commandment to the Old Testament patriarchs to "replenish the earth," and they had the authority of Cotton Mather for believing that God punished women who blasphemed against the holy duty of childbearing with "multiplied and repeated miscarriages;" so the rule with every Puritan family was a baby every two years. The result was that many men married and wore out two or three wives; bachelors were regarded with great suspicion, and not allowed to live alone; and the ordinary male commenced prospecting for his next wife as soon as the funeral feast was over. Timothy's children came according to the rule—the early ones at intervals of a little less than two years, and the last of all three years and a month after the last but one; but his wife must have been unusually robust, for she survived her husband and several of her children and died at the age of ninety-nine.

Timothy was an indifferent farmer; and in later years, like almost all his fellow-clergymen at that period, was in serious financial difficulties, owing to the depreciation of the currency and the unwillingness of his parishioners to pay his salary with any regularity. He also quarreled with his church because they did not pay him sufficient deference—as for instance by lifting their hats when they met him in the street,—and because he maintained that one of them, by marrying a girl against her father's will, had violated the fifth and eighth commandments; he did not, however, like many clergymen at that period, start a lawsuit against the parish for his unpaid salary. Such conditions were common at that time in the New England villages; the New England laymen had resistance to authority in their blood, and in the course of generations the piety, which had made their ancestors kiss the feet of good ministers, had worn very thin. Timothy was considered a successful minister and God blessed his church with several notable spasms of revivalism.

Jonathan was born in 1703—the fifth child and only son. Of his boyhood very little is known. Puritan boys were very like other boys, and their wickedness was a continual trouble to theologians, who used them as examples of the total depravity of unconverted men; one sometimes finds grave New England clergymen solemnly making restitution for the apples and candy which they had stolen in their boyhood and pleading with God for forgiveness. Their wickedness during meeting was particularly distressing; they sat all together at the back, instead of with their parents; and though there was a tithing-man with a stick to keep them in order, church meetings were continually discussing means of stopping them from ogling the girls and carving the woodwork, instead of listening to the sermon or, like most of their parents, going to sleep; sometimes they were even haled into the lawcourts for kicking each other or clambering over the benches or bullying some priggish companion who persisted in taking notes of what the minister said. That Edwards ever misbehaved is, however, unlikely; he was far too precocious.

He must have been a solitary child. He was educated by his father, along with two or three other clergymen's sons and his ten sisters. When his father was away—for in 1709 he went as chaplain of the Connecticut troops to Albany and fell seriously ill, and in 1711 he accompanied the ill-fated expedition to Quebec—he left instructions that Jonathan must say his Latin lessons to his elder sisters. His life must have consisted of study, of help on the farm, of roaming through the countryside, and of sitting on winter evenings with his sisters in the great fireplace while his father's negro slave piled on the wood.

Timothy was not puritanical in the modern sense of the word, but he had a vivid appreciation of the existence of hell. Children, even babies still in the womb, had immortal souls; Puritan mothers refused to swallow the logical consequences of this doctrine, and it was therefore taught that *some* of those who died in their infancy would be saved from hell by methods unknown and mysterious to man; but all those who were capable of moral consciousness had to be converted, or else they would be damned; and the fact was impressed upon the young, in pious families, at the earliest possible moment. When young Edwards learned to read, he learned that he must inevitably die, and go either to heaven or hell. He had to repeat, from the "New England Primer,"

"In the burying place may see
Graves shorter there than I,
From death's arrest no age is free,
Young children too must die."

And in Michael Wigglesworth's "Day of Doom" he read a description of the day of judgment and the dreadful fate of those who had disobeyed God's law. To these ideas he did not take kindly; that God should consign the majority of mankind to eternal punishment seemed to him a horrible doctrine, and his mind was full of objections against it. He brooded over it continually.

Like most sensitive children in religious environments, he had for a time a morbidly precocious interest in religion. At the age of eight he was affected by a revival in his father's congregation, and for many months used to say his prayers five times a day; he also built a booth in a swampy place in the woods on the hill above his father's house, and prayed there with two other boys. These performances gave him much pleasure. But after a while he lost interest in the next world, and stopped saying his prayers. However, he continued to be terrified of thunderstorms, which to all New Englanders were a sign that God was angry.

His keenest interest was in nature. He was a pantheist of a type very uncommon before the romantic movement. To pious New Englanders, after the first Elizabethan delight of exploration in strange countries had worn off, the earth was merely a stage for the misery of man, sharing in his corruption; but to Edwards it was always the garment of God; God revealed Himself in the beauty of the Connecticut hills as truly as in a sanctified heart. He had the keenest delight in simple things: in the strength of rocks, the movement of clouds, the color of rainbows, the sweet taste of honey, the melody of songs, and the grace of the human form, even when the soul inside was wicked. Two ideas took possession of him and dominated his life: the idea that the universe was a single closely-knit system, in which even the smallest of atoms performed a necessary function; and the idea that the universe, and the God who made it, were beautiful. And beauty he thought of, in agreement with the philosophers of his age, as being a harmony based on a proportion.

He was an ardent student of books and natural phenomena from an extraordinarily early age. When he was eleven he wrote a description of the flying spider. Gentlemen in England at that time were very interested in scientific observations from the American continent, and would receive with gratitude the horn of a unicorn, or a piece of earth from a hill in Maine which had suddenly leaped fifty feet across a wood and a stream. For one of these Edwards described the habits of the spider, which he had himself observed in the woods near his home; and concluded by suggesting that every autumn the flying spiders were all blown by the wind out into the Atlantic Ocean; "the chief end of this faculty, that is given them," he declared, "is not their recreation, but their destruction." The narrative is thoroughly characteristic, and the writing shows no trace of immaturity; but his speculation as to the fate of the unfortunate spiders is pure fantasy; it has, however, a strange psychological interest, as will be seen later. At an even earlier age he wrote a witty and good-humored confutation of the idea that the soul is material, apparently modeling his style on Addison's.

It is difficult, indeed, to name a parallel to Edwards in intellectual precocity. His fundamental conceptions were all formulated in his early teens, and at the age of fifty he was still working out their implications.

From childhood he was a passionate student; and along the single channel which he selected, and which it never occurred to him to alter, his spirit flowed with unrivaled intensity. The core of his being was a passionate worship of life; and with it a passionate hatred of whatever impeded life, and a passionate contempt for whatever was deficient in life. Given Edwards's interests and Edwards's environment, that passion had to have strange consequences.

# CHAPTER II

## THE INFANCY OF YALE

WHEN he was thirteen years old Edwards became a college student at Wethersfield.

Yale at this time scarcely existed. Since 1701 there had been students at Saybrook; and for the first six years there had been an active rector, Abraham Pierson. Then Pierson died, and his titular successor was the minister of Milford, an unpractical recluse who scarcely left his study except to preach; he rode over to Saybrook, forty-five miles, to give degrees once a year, and the real authority was exercised by a couple of tutors scarcely older than the undergraduates. Few of the students learned anything, and those who did complained that they knew more than the tutors. So after some years they took the law into their own hands and seceded; half of them settled down at Wethersfield, forty miles up the river.

In any case scarcely anything was taught that was worth learning. The curriculum consisted of a little Cicero and a little Vergil, a little of the New Testament in Greek and a little of the Book of Psalms in Hebrew, a few books of theology and philosophy written a century before, some elementary mathematics, some surveying, and also "physicks." "Physicks" was taught from a manuscript textbook written by Rector Pierson, and included a knowledge of Ptolemaic cosmology; the theory that the earth went round the sun, accepted by Europe for a century, was still regarded in Connecticut as a wild speculation. Pierson's textbook has not survived; but at contemporary Harvard students were learning that lightning was an exhalation raised up from the earth by the sun and shut up in a cloud, that thunder was the noise made by the lightning when it burst the cloud, that if anybody looked at lightning his face might swell up and become covered with scabs, and that sleep was caused by "streames of food and blood ascending to the Brain, by whose coldness they are said to be condens'd into moisture, which obstructs the passage of the Spirits that they can't freely permeate to the Organs of Senses." In addition to information about the movements of the sun, the lightning, and the human body, "physicks" included "fortification," and the ability to measure the capacity of a cask.

In 1711 James Pierpont, minister of New Haven, and Jeremiah Dummer, colony agent in London, began angling for subscriptions in Great Britain; and by haunting rich men's doorsteps, Dummer soon collected a remarkable library. Sir Isaac Newton and a number of clergymen presented him with their writings; Dick Steele brought him "all the Tatlers and Spectators, being eleven volumes in Royal paper, neatly bound and gilt;" and Sir Richard Blackmore, the celebrated poet, galloped up to his house in his own chariot, with all his works, in four volumes folio;

Dummer also collected copies of almost all the classics of English literature, excluding of course those written for the stage. These books were despatched to Saybrook in nine boxes.

In the same year Sir John Davie sent on his own account six boxes of theological treatises. Sir John Davie had formerly been a humble farmer of New London; one summer morning in 1707 he was hoeing corn, with his feet bare and his shirtsleeves and trousers rolled up, and competing with a neighbor who was also hoeing corn, when a messenger galloped up and slapped him on the shoulder, crying, "I salute you, Sir John Davie;" his brother, a rich English baronet, had died. So Sir John Davie left his neighbor to his hoeing, married the sister of the Governor of Connecticut, had dinner with the Governor of Massachusetts, and took ship for England. He became high sheriff of Devonshire, informed his old friends in America that he had been far happier in the days when his dinner consisted of a single dish of cornbeans, and died soon after from gout in the head.

The trustees of the college paid court also in an even more profitable quarter. Elihu Yale, formerly Governor of Fort St. George in India, a man with a large nose and a coarse face, who had amassed a large fortune among the Indians, was now living in a fashionable part of London; he had been born in Boston, and his father had once lived in New Haven. As he had no sons he was proposing to adopt a distant relative, who lived on a farm near New Haven;

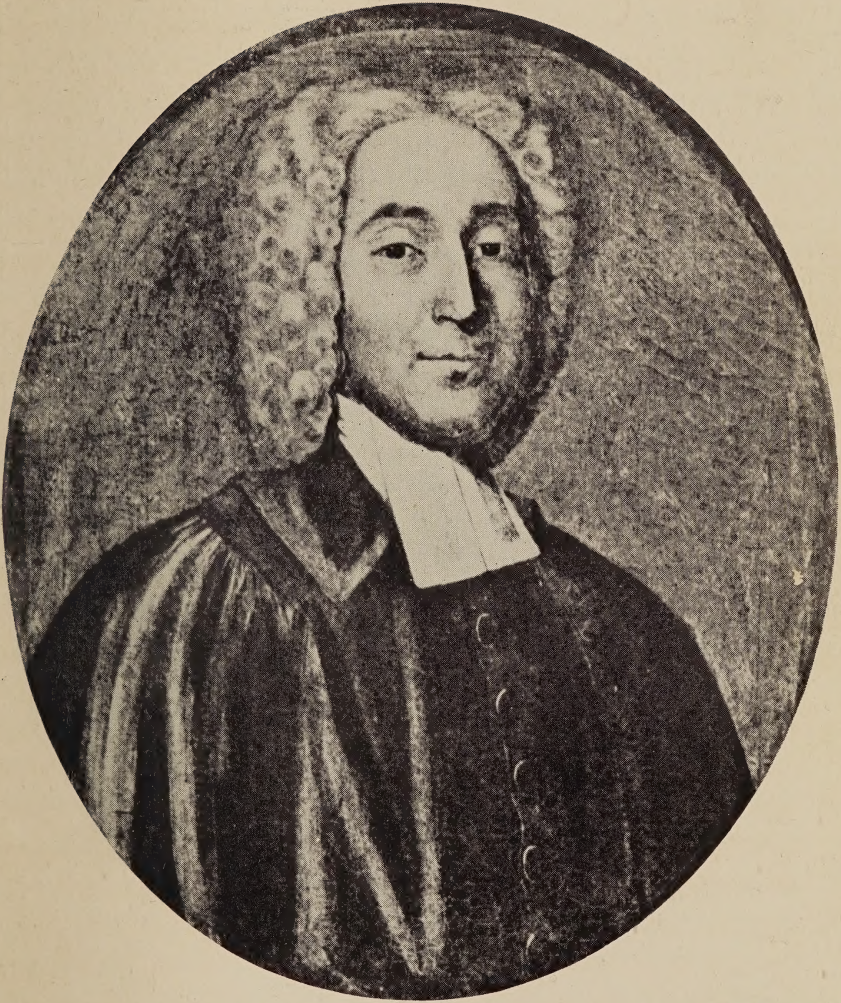
but when the boy reached London, the Governor was so disappointed that he despatched him back to his farm by the next boat. So the Governor's fortune was going a-begging. He contributed a few volumes to the nine boxes, though "very little considering his Estate." And after more assiduous courting, and a letter from Cotton Mather, of Boston, who wished to do as much harm as possible to his own university of Harvard, and who took it upon himself, wholly without authority, to suggest that, in return for assistance, the institution might assume the name of "Yale College," he condescended to despatch to Boston, for the benefit of the college, three bales of assorted cloths, which were sold for five hundred and sixty-two pounds, twelve shillings, and no pence. The college was promptly rechristened; and the gratified nabob, egged on by Dummer, promised his portrait at full length, a parcel of books, "some mathematical instruments, and glasses for making philosophical experiments," and two hundred pounds a year. Unfortunately, however, as Dummer complained, "old gentlemen are forgetful," and a few years later the Governor died intestate before the college had received another penny, and his fortune passed to his three daughters and their English husbands.

These acquisitions caused a furious battle about the location of Yale. The towns of Hartford, Saybrook, Middletown, and New Haven were all in the running; their inhabitants looked forward to a prospect of students boarding with them and buying food and liquor from them in ever-increasing quantities for generations to come; and the ministers wanted their sons to attend college as close to their own homes as possible. In 1716 the trustees of the college chose New Haven, which had voted more money for its support than the other towns; but Hartford, led by its minister, refused to submit, and there were furious battles in the General Assembly. In that year thirteen youths came to New Haven, three or four refused to leave Saybrook, and fourteen stayed at Wethersfield; among the fourteen was Edwards, then a freshman. The trustees, however, stood firm, and built a "College Hall" at New Haven; this was a structure one hundred and sixty-five feet long and three stories high, but only twenty-two feet thick; it was made of wood, and painted blue.

The library, meanwhile, was still at Saybrook, in the house of a certain Mr. Buckingham, who refused to surrender it. In December the sheriff was ordered to seize it. He found the house barricaded; but his constables broke down the door, carried out the books, and piled them on ox-wagons; by this time evening had fallen, so the books were left for the night on the ox-wagons, under guard. But the people of Saybrook had not yet given up hope: for fifteen years the young men had boarded in their houses, and there was still one student in the town, who had refused to follow his classmates; the name of this Casabianca has not been recorded, but he must have been a true son of New England. During the night the indignant citizens turned loose the oxen, upset the carts, carried off a number of the books, and broke down the bridges along the roads to New Haven. Next day the sheriff managed to carry most of the library into safe territory at Killingworth, and two days later the oxen drew it triumphantly into New Haven; but two hundred and sixty of the volumes which Dummer had collected in London were never recovered from the citizens of Saybrook.

One motive which kept Edwards and his companions at Wethersfield was the distance; New Haven was difficult of access, and the best way of reaching it was to take ship down the river and along the coast; students who could not afford a horse or a sea-voyage had to tramp thither by foot with packs on their shoulders; when they arrived they were sometimes punished for traveling on the Sabbath. An even stronger inducement was the personality of the Wethersfield tutor, Elisha Williams. Williams was born in 1694 and educated at Harvard; after graduation he went on a voyage to Nova Scotia to preach to the fishermen; in addition to tutoring fourteen students and working his farm, he was in 1718 acting as clerk of the lower house of the General Assembly; subsequently he became a minister, served for thirteen years as rector of Yale, resigned the rectorship and became judge of the superior court, wrote one of the ablest political pamphlets ever published in New England, joined the expedition against Louisburg as chaplain, became next year colonel and commander-in-chief of the Connecticut troops, traveled to London on political business, and at the age of fifty-seven won the hand of an English poetess; he was descended from several of the most famous families in early New England history.

In 1718 the General Assembly ordered the Wethersfield students to come down to New Haven. At the end of November Edwards and his classmates condescended to obey, and for a month all went well. They were however unaccustomed to college discipline, and were described as "a very vicious and turbulent set of fellows," who were "very immoral in their Conversation so that they became odious to the people of the Town;" this would be interesting if it were true, but it sounds exaggerated. They made "a mighty Specious appearance of Submission and order;" but it soon appeared that this was all part of a "black design" for getting back to Wethersfield and Tutor Williams. The minister of Milford was still nominal rector; and the college was governed by two young tutors, with help from Noyes, the New Haven minister; Noyes appears in history again and again, and always in the same rôle, that of the dullest preacher of his generation. One of the tutors was Samuel Johnson: he was one of the earliest New Englanders to appreciate the importance of contemporary scientific and philosophical movements, and to study Bacon, Locke, and Newton; he subsequently founded Columbia University. Why the Wethersfield students should have picked him out for criticism it is difficult to understand; but they made a list of all the deficiencies of the New Haven college, in which the doctrines and methods of Tutor Johnson had the most prominent place, and secretly despatched it to the minister of Hart-



(*From an old print.*)

ELISHA WILLIAMS

ford, who knew how to make good use of it. By this method they managed to alarm their parents; three frightened clergymen hurried up to New Haven to remove their sons from such evil influences; and the upshot was that on January 10th all the Wethersfield students except one returned in triumph to Elisha Williams.

Whether Edwards was a leader in these disturbances is not known; but he certainly enjoyed taking part in them. In a letter to his sister he writes, complacently: "I suppose you are fully acquainted with our coming away from New Haven, and the circumstances thereof. Since then we have been in a more prosperous condition, as I think, than ever." He adds that "the cause of our coming away" was Tutor Johnson.

There are strange ironies in the pattern of life. Elisha Williams disliked his brilliant pupil: many years later he became one of the bitterest and most active of his enemies.

The Wethersfield rebels were still supported by the people of Hartford and the neighboring towns. In the elections of 1719 the rebellion became a political issue; the Governor of Connecticut was accused by the Hartford minister of breaking the sixth and eighth commandments of the decalogue because he had ordered the library to be fetched from Saybrook. This terrible accusation only recoiled upon the head of its author; the people of Connecticut were not convinced that the battle of the books had involved their Governor in murder and theft, and he was reëlected; the minister of Hartford, who had been chosen as representative by his town, was sued for slander. The Governor then decided that the affair must end: he spurred into activity the trustees of the college; and they summoned up enough energy to depose the minister of Milford, and to elect as rector Timothy Cutler, who promised actually to reside at Yale; at the same time Johnson ceased to hold office as tutor. The Wethersfield students had now no further excuse for their rebellion; and when Elisha Williams fell ill, they all returned to New Haven. The minister of Hartford made his peace, and his wife presented the college with a bell.

Cutler made a strong and imposing rector, and promised to show no discrimination against the rebels. Edwards reported to his father that "Mr. Cutler is extraordinarily courteous to us, has a very good spirit of government, keeps the school in excellent order, seems to increase in learning, is loved and respected by all who are under him, and when he is spoken of in the school or town, he generally has the title of President. The scholars all live in very good peace with the people of the town, and there is not a word said about our former carryings on except now and then by aunt Mather." "Aunt Mather" was the wife of a prominent citizen of New Haven, who had been a leader in getting the college placed in that town.

Cutler had already delved deeply into the books which Dummer had sent across; and under his charge the curriculum was modernized: the students were taught that the earth went round the sun; and Edwards reported to his father that he would need "Alstead's Geometry and Gassendus' Astronomy"; to which he added, on his own account, "a pair of dividers, or mathematician's compasses, and a scale," and "also, the Art of Thinking, which I am persuaded, would be no less profitable, than the other necessary."

So during his senior year Edwards lived in the cerulean College Hall and was under regular college discipline. This meant that he attended prayers at sunrise in winter and at six in summer; then recited to his tutor until half past seven, when he ate breakfast; studied until noon, when there was dinner, followed by a break of an hour and a half for exercise; studied again until evening prayers and supper; retired to his room at nine; and had to be in bed by eleven. The daily menu was as follows: "For Breakfast: one loaf of bread for four, which (the Dough) shall weigh one pound. For Dinner for four: one loaf of bread as aforesaid; two and a half pounds of beef, veal, or mutton, or one and three quarter pounds of salt pork about twice a week in the summer time; one quart of beer; two pennyworth of sauce. For Supper for four: two quarts of milk and one loaf of bread, when milk can conveniently be had; and when it cannot, then an apple-pie, which shall be made of one and three quarter pounds of dough, one-quarter of a pound of hog's fat, two ounces of sugar, and half a peck of apples." Poor students used to sell part of their commons; and the dining hall was filled with their shouts, as they offered pieces of bread and apple pie in sale to their richer brethren. Undergraduates could also purchase beer from the butler, who was a graduate student, and would dispense it at twopence a quart.

The students in each class were graded according to the social prestige of their parents; and the sons of governors and superior court judges, who were at the head of their class, would be given the best seats and the best rooms. Freshmen had to run errands for upper classmen, and hazing was an established custom; twenty years later, at the height of the Great Awakening, when all Yale was in terror of hellfire, a freshman wrote in his diary that "this day we were taken up into the long garret to be tourmented by the sophoi-moroi."

These Yale students were an odd mixture of animal spirits and precocious religiosity. They used to hold prayer meetings, at which they prayed extempore with tremendous fervor; most of them expected to be ministers, and during their college course they had to preach sermons, and to learn by heart textbooks of Calvinist theology; every Sabbath they marched down in billowing gowns to the meeting house on the green, to listen to the tedious moralizings of Pastor Noyes; and absentees paid a twenty-shilling fine. The rules of the college required them to read the scriptures and pray to God in private every day.

But these appearances of piety were only one side of the picture; most of them graduated before they were eighteen, and schoolboys exceed even adults in their capacity for being inconsistent. We hear from Edwards of "unseasonable nightwalking, breaking people's windows, playing at cards, cursing, swearing, and damning." The students used to break out of college at night, and steal "hens, geese, turkies, piggs, meat, wood, etc." They used to send freshmen into town to bring back rum, which they would drink in the meeting house during the sermon; or they would hold a party and make a tremendous noise, firing guns, ringing the college bell, and insulting any college officer who happened to come along. On one occasion they stole the wine bottles of an unpopular tutor, and stove open his cider cask. Another time some of the freshmen got six quarts of rum, two pails of cider, and eight pounds of sugar, and invited every scholar in the college; they made such a riot that a tutor came and ordered them to their rooms; a few of them obeyed, but some minutes later they all gathered again and went up to the door of an unpopular resident of New Haven, and drummed against it, and yelled, and screamed, so that the neighbors thought they were killing dogs.

Students who broke the rules were fined, degraded, or expelled. These punishments did not, however, exhaust the resources of the faculty: once, when a student rang the college bell for an hour on end, they held a debate about the matter, and reached the decision that he should have his ears boxed by the rector.

Whatever Edwards's demeanor may have been at Wethersfield, he was now growing religious, and was a pleasure to his instructors. He was graduated at the head of his class and was chosen to deliver the valedictory oration at Commencement. College Commencements were occasions of great festivity, deplored by old-fashioned Puritans like Cotton Mather; alumni and political dignitaries from all over the state rode into town with their wives behind them, and greeted their old college friends. In the afternoon, the men resplendent in bright scarlet coats with ruffles and much silver and gold braid, the women with fans and hooped petticoats, they all gathered in the meeting house, where, after a prayer, the valedictory oration was delivered; then a minister made a Latin speech, and the seniors were graduated, and the governor made another Latin speech. In the evening the ladies were entertained in the library, and the gentlemen were given a splendid dinner in the hall, of pudding followed by half a dozen different meat dishes; the students meanwhile ate dinner and sang songs and fired guns and rang the college bell on their own account. When everybody had finished eating and drinking, the day ended with the singing of a psalm.

Edwards had now decided to study for the ministry, so he returned to New Haven for two more years as a graduate student. For the first year he was chosen college butler, and had to dole out cider and beer from the buttery.

In March there was another rebellion: the undergraduates decided that the food was uneatable, and resolved, one and all, not to appear at commons. Timothy Cutler, however, was equal to the situation: he harangued the students, and showed himself "exceedingly vex'd, and displeased at the act, which so affrighted the scholars that they unanimously agreed to come into commons again." Edwards disapproved of the rebellion: "I must needs say for my own part," he wrote to his father, "that although the commons at sometimes have not been sufficient as for quality, yet I think there has been very little occasion for such an insurrection as this." He was now a serious and hardworking student, dreaming of glory as a philosopher and a career in Europe. Some of the students, he told his father, had been caught stealing and nightwalking and would be expelled; but "through the goodness of God I am perfectly free of all their janglings." Contempt for persons less gifted than himself was always one of his most prominent traits.

# CHAPTER III

## THE YOUNG PHILOSOPHER

IT would not have been surprising if a boy educated under such conditions had learned nothing at all; but Edwards seems to have profited from the very freedom which he enjoyed.

Probably the Wethersfield curriculum was similar to that which Rector Pierson had instituted at Saybrook; but it was not quite so mediaeval in spirit. Elisha Williams, like Samuel Johnson, realized that the philosophers of Europe had not been inactive in the ninety years since the fathers of New England had taken their degrees at Cambridge; and the political pamphlet which he wrote eighteen years later shows a profound admiration for the philosophy of John Locke. Presumably it was he that introduced Locke to his pupil; for in his second year at Wethersfield Edwards read the "Essay on the Human Understanding," and derived from it, as he related many years afterwards, a greater pleasure "than the most greedy miser finds, when gathering up handfuls of silver and gold, from some newly discovered treasure."

Stimulated by his reading of Locke, the fourteen-year-old schoolboy began on his own account a series of notes on philosophical problems. The first was a definition of "excellency," so long and elaborate that we may suppose it to have been a frequent subject of meditation. He could not have started more appropriately.

He began by defining material beauty; and with the aid of several geometrical designs, he satisfied himself that it was all a matter of symmetry; beauty was a harmony in which the details were balanced against each other. "The beautiful shape of flowers, the beauty of the body of man, and of the bodies of other animals;" the pleasures of music, and colors, and sweet tastes and smells: all were derived from harmony. His explanations were inadequate enough; but what interested him was to pass on to spiritual beauty. That too was based on harmony: the harmony of the separate souls with each other and with God, which is called love.

To the young dreamer, walking alone in the fields at Wethersfield, the whole universe was a single harmony, the whole universe was beautiful; and if any of the details seemed ugly, that was because the universe, like a complicated melody, required "a vastly larger view" to comprehend it. For the universe was God's artistic creation; it was God expressing Himself, for His own æsthetic delight. And the beauty of each soul was to participate in the melody of the universe, by loving the universe and God. "A lower kind of love," he said, a love for a woman or a possession, "may be odious, because it hinders, or is contrary to, a higher and a more general. Even as a lower proportion is often a deformity, because it is contrary to a more general proportion."

The boy passed on still further. Why was harmony beautiful? What was the highest good? What was the ultimate reality? To Edwards, exulting in the powers of his mind and in æsthetic delights, it was life itself; life was the highest good; harmony was good because it promoted life, disharmony was ugly because it contradicted life. God was life in excelsis; and the human being was most beautiful and most alive when it loved God, most ugly and nearest to nothingness when it hated Him.

These ideas were new; no other New Englander had ever approached them; the boy Edwards worked them out by himself; and forty years later he was still elaborating them; for after he was converted, his God-intoxication united with the traditional theology of Calvinism to form a new compound.

There were seventy-two notes in all. The schoolboy meditated upon a great variety of philosophical topics. Incidentally—for the fact is not important—he worked out an idealism similar to that of Berkeley in England; he also anticipated some of the most important suggestions of Hume and Kant; and played with ideas of the relativity of motion and the finiteness of the universe in words which might have been written yesterday. But his central theme was the glory of God, the God whom he had found in sweet sensations and natural beauties, a God who loved Himself and all things living, not the Calvinist God who punished men in hell. There is all the charm of innocence and novelty, and sometimes also an unearthly mystic beauty, about these early notes, which disappeared from the treatises of the theologian.

He took all knowledge as his field; and after reading Newton and Rector Pierson, began a second series of notes on natural science. He was not a scientist: his purpose was to prove the existence of God, not to discover truth. Upon a suggestion or an observation, wholly unproved, he would build the most magnificent fancies. He was a poet, playing with possibilities; he took an exuberant delight in striking out hypotheses, in exercising his mind with logical speculations. Of the scientific skepticism, the need to experiment, the search for proof, he had not a trace. The most memorable passages in these notes are poetic: as when he describes "nothing" as "the same that the sleeping rocks do dream of." Typical of them are memoranda like: "To find out a thousand things by due observation of the Spheroid of the Universe;" and, after discussing the refraction of light rays, "To seek out other strange phenomena, and compare them together, and see what qualities can be made out of them: And if we can discover them, it is probable we may be let into a New World of Philosophy." The sense of wonder is magnificent, worthy of a Leonardo; but it is not science.

He used the Newtonian theory to prove that if the smallest atom were misplaced, the whole universe would, in the course of infinite time, be thrown into confusion; hence it must have had an all-wise designer. This was the core of his speculations.

In the eighteenth century it did not occur to people that the universe might have evolved by accident, or that it was already in confusion.

The scope of his observations was prodigious: the human anatomy, the saltness of the sea, the structure of light waves, the nature of stars and atoms, the cause of lightning, the erosion of valleys, the growth of trees, the content of fogs, the color of the sun's rays when they passed through the leaves of a tree on to the pages of a book—he had new theories to propound about them all.

He proved thus that water could be compressed. The solid earth, according to the second of the ten commandments, rested upon water; obviously that water was compressed. But nobody had actually been able to compress water; that however was merely for lack of power.

He had some remarkable suggestions to offer about planetary influence on human history. The heavenly bodies, he suggested, discharged streams of particles which hit the earth, and caused direct alterations in terrestrial affairs; such alterations must have been stronger before the flood, when the atmosphere of the earth was less disturbed; and the antediluvian patriarchs, being long-lived, had enjoyed special opportunities for observing them scientifically; thus a tradition, handed down by Noah, had probably caused the general opinion that the moon and the planets affected the movement of events.

As the notes increased, and with them his pride in his own intellectual capacity, he began to dream of glory; he would publish a great philosophical treatise, and become famous in Europe. He drew up a scheme for it: it was to have two parts, the first on the mind, the second on the external world. For the treatise on the mind he enumerated fifty-six subjects, covering every branch of psychology. For the treatise on the external world he wrote an introduction, and some preliminary propositions, and notes on "being" and "atoms," and a series of eighty-eight topics to be "written fully about."

On the inside page of the cover of his notebook he wrote down a number of rules to guide him in writing this work. Those in longhand were naïve but harmless. "Let much modesty be seen in the style," he reminded himself. And "let there be much compliance with the reader's weakness, and according to the rules in the Ladies' Library, Vol. 1, p. 340." He resolved "to be very moderate in the use of terms of art. Let it not look as if I was much read, or was conversant with books, or with the learned world." And he decided that the preface should form part of the body of the work; "then I shall be sure to have it read by every one."

But several of the notes were written in shorthand, in order that they might be illegible to his classmates. Two of these were: "Before I venture to publish in London, to make some experiment in my own country, to play at small games first. That I may gain some experience in writing, first to write letters to some in England and to try my hand in lesser matters before I venture in great." And, "The World will expect more modesty because of my circumstances, in America, young, etc. Let there therefore be a superabundance of modesty and, though perhaps 'twill otherwise be needless, it will wonderfully make way for its reception in the world. Mankind are by nature proud and exceeding envious and evermore jealous of such upstarts, and it exceedingly irritates and affronts them to see them appear in print."

Such self-confidence, from a youth of seventeen in a backward province on the edge of the civilized world, is amazing; almost as amazing as the speculative genius which prompted it.

Meanwhile his attitude to religion was ambiguous. He accepted Christianity; he even began a series of notes on the Bible, and another on theology; but he had not been converted; he had no appreciation of the depravity of man, and the imminence of hellfire; he was, in fact, like most other New Englanders of his day, a nominal believer.

His conversion occurred when he was seventeen years old, in the first of his two years as a graduate student. This event has had such an enormous influence on the future of America that it is necessary to study it carefully; unfortunately the evidence is scanty, and any account of why it happened must be based partly on guesswork.

The dogma of original sin, upon which Christianity is built, is a mythological explanation of the feeling that something is wrong with life in this world. It has reference both to the inner life of the soul and to the external world. Calvinist theology declared that the inner life was corrupted first, by deliberate choice in Adam but by an inevitable inheritance in his descendants, and that God's anger then blasted the external world.

To young Edwards, in the woods of the Connecticut Valley, the world was beautiful. In his last year at college he learned that it was also ugly.

He realized that some day he must die; perhaps he would die quite soon, before he had finished his speculations, before he had published his treatise and earned applause in London. He fell ill with pleurisy, and for a time his life was in danger. He had a delicate constitution and there was no knowing what might happen to him. Sudden death was the commonest of occurrences in New England; strong men went to bed in health, awoke in the night with violent pains, and died in a few hours; doctors were worse than useless; food might easily cause horrible diseases, and worms many feet long were sometimes found inside men's bodies. A myriad accidents might await a young philosopher: Red Indians and Frenchmen descending from the Berkshire Hills, a rattlesnake in the grass or a mettlesome horse, a sudden storm at sea.

Children often died before they were properly alive. This was a very puzzling phenomenon; and Edwards watched their death-pangs with a kind of fascination. The "throat-distemper," apparently what we call diphtheria, descended upon the New England towns, one after another, in the twenties and thirties, and slew the children by scores; entire families were wiped out. The accepted remedy was to beat together mustard, pepper, and the rind of elder bark, and apply it to the nape of the neck; this was supposed to "draw away the malignity." Why, asked Edwards, should innocent creatures endure these dreadful pains? The young man saw their feverish brows, their anguished cries, their tortured expressions, as they passed out of a life which they had scarcely entered. It seemed to him that the children offered up to Moloch in the fire or roasted inside the brazen bull could scarcely have suffered such torments. How could this be reconciled with a God of beauty and all-embracing love?

The theology of his forefathers gave him an explanation: God had given man a law; man had disobeyed God and broken the law; God was therefore angry with man and with the world.

In his own soul there were phenomena equally puzzling. His ambition was to live passionately the life of a philosopher; he wanted to live intensely with his whole being every hour of the day. But his body was weak; he was attacked by headaches; he became tired and dull; he was easily upset by eating wrong foods. His consciousness was beset by alien impulses; desires, not included in the system which he had imposed upon himself, sprang up from his subconsciousness and distracted him; sensuality, which he had banned from the circle of life, became the enemy of life; to Edwards it was not an aid to passionate living, but an encumbrance; he used arithmetic as an anaphrodisiac, but he knew now that there was a devil.

Once more the theology of his forefathers gave him an explanation: the first man had sinned; and hence all his descendants, born in sin, were unable to be perfect and heirs of corruption.

Intellectually convinced, he turned to religion; he abandoned all habits which were considered sinful, and practiced many religious duties. But he took no delight in behaving piously; and he still rebelled against hellfire and predestination.

One day he was reading, from the Book of Timothy, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen." The rhythm of the words, with their slow repetitiveness, like the music of a Catholic Mass, threw a spell upon him, and he fell into a trance. There was a God, eternal, immortal, invisible; there was a God, who knew all things, who could do all things; there was a God, beautiful, mighty, majestic; there was a God, matchless in all perfections; there was a God, who was life in excelsis, who was passionate yet immovable. "Oh, if only I might enjoy that God! If only I might be rapt up to Him in heaven, and swallowed up in Him for ever!" he cried. He began chanting to himself, again and again, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory." For God was all that he could never be; He was that beauty which filled his dreams; He was that power for which he pined.

He had forgotten himself; he thought only of the glory of God.

"It never came into my thought," said Edwards, "that there was any thing spiritual, or of a saving nature in this." Several years afterwards he came to regard it as his conversion. But it violated all the regulations which the theologians had laid down, because it was not caused by fear of hell; so for a long time Edwards was not sure whether he had really been saved.

According to the theologians a necessary preliminary to conversion was to become very heartily terrified of hell-fire. The unconverted man was completely depraved; he was not merely sinful; everybody was sinful; the unconverted man was incapable of a single deed or word or thought which was not wicked. For everything not done for the glory of God was wicked; and unconverted men were men who acted to please themselves or to please other people or to benefit the world, and not for God's glory. Consequently it was useless to tell the unconverted man how good God was or how beautiful virtue was; he was unable in his wickedness to appreciate anything good; he must be thoroughly terrified by telling him about the pains of hell; this first stage in the conversion of a sinner was called "legal repentance." When the sinner was thus prepared, God, if He so willed it, gave him His grace; He poured into the sinner's soul the knowledge of Himself and His own perfection; henceforth the sinner, having something good inside him, endeavored to obey God's law, and to act only for the glory of God; he was now capable of "evangelical repentance."

Edwards, however, had scarcely been terrified of hell at all; he had never had any strong sense of sin; he had never felt that he was disobedient to God; he had been dissatisfied with the world, and had had a mystic experience. This difference between what he had actually experienced and what, according to the theologians, he ought to have experienced, caused him much perplexity; even four years later he was still worried about it.

If he had thought about it more deeply, he might have become the greatest figure in the history of American thought; he might have altered the whole of the future history of America.

But, when one considers his environment and the possible alternatives, his acceptance of the Calvinist system is easy to understand: it explained the beauty of the natural world; it explained why men and innocent children lived such miserable lives and were tormented by such horrible diseases; it explained Edwards's dissatisfaction with his own personality. Most other kinds of Christianity would have explained these problems equally well. But for Edwards, in New England, in 1721, the only alternatives were deism and the Anglicanism of the eighteenth century. The deists offered no explanation at all for what puzzled Edwards. They went about saying that God was benevolent; God benevolent, when infant children were allowed to die in torment! The Anglicans—those at least whom Edwards knew—were hardly an improvement. They affirmed that God punished men for their good; but how were infant children benefited by being slain with the throat distemper? It was like justifying a parent who broke the bones of his children, not because they had sinned, but for fear they might sin. They believed in free will, and denied the necessity of conversion; but Edwards had himself experienced conversion, and he knew that it was not his own willing that had caused it, but the grace of God showered upon him from above. Moreover, to be an Anglican meant to deny the wisdom of the founders of New England, to belong to the same confession as royal governors in Boston and persecuting bishops in Great Britain, to increase the subserviency of the New World to the Old; Edwards was becoming patriotic.

So from the spring of 1721 he adopted the Calvinist creed and the Calvinist moral code, and set himself to school his nature to it and to convert other people.

In the course of years he accepted predestination and hellfire, as he accepted the belief in the imminence of the millennium, because they formed part of the theology which corresponded in other ways to his experience. He found for the mystery of hell a new and strange solution, growing out of his old conviction of the beauty of the universe. He explained it by the necessity of contrast. Goodness was impossible without wickedness, beauty without ugliness, and happiness without misery; a universe which contained a maximum of goodness must contain also a maximum of evil; a universe all white would be a universe of gray, and therefore there must also be black. For this reason God, when He made the world, had withdrawn His light from a part of it, in order that He might shine more brightly on the remainder. The world was a drama, a picture, a melody, the most beautiful which God could have made; and men were puppets whom God elected, as He thought best, for goodness or wickedness. Those elected for goodness, having fought in this world against evil, would in the next be lifted up to an infinite happiness; and looking down out of heaven, they would realize their own ecstasy by contrasting it with the infinite misery of the sinners in the flames of hell. Thus the beauty of the Calvinist universe satisfied the laws worked out by the pantheist schoolboy; it was a harmony in which the details—heaven and hell—were balanced against each other.

## CHAPTER IV

## DECAY OF SUPERSTITION

THE religion to which Edwards gave his adherence was sorely in need of defense. Calvinism was passing away, not in the heat of controversy, but silently and from neglect.

A theorist who has absolute faith in his theories can alter the ideals of men for generations. Such a theorist was John Calvin, the French theologian who in the sixteenth century, from his cottage in Geneva, led the servants of Christ in their war with popery. The New England churches, until Edwards came, were his lengthened shadow.

Calvin had a legal mind; he was a coldblooded logician, without a spark of mysticism, who could burn men at the stake for denying what he believed; his individuality was swallowed up in his creed; he had no personal idiosyncrasies by which posterity may recognize him. His strength was his absolute faith in the theology which his own intellect had created; by this, and this alone, he deflected the stream of history.

His cold unspiritual system was an amazing travesty of the Christianity which, in the Middle Ages, had satisfied the dreams of beggars and poets. There was a cosmic despot, God; to Calvin he was like one of the Renaissance tyrants whom he knew so well, just as in the Middle Ages the universe of saints and angels was a feudal hierarchy, and in our own day the dim outlines of an impersonal God reflect an impersonal democracy. God, for reasons which man must not try to understand, had made man and ordered him to obey a law. Man having broken the law, God became furiously angry and condemned him and all his descendants to eternal punishment in hell. Subsequently, however, God decided to pick out a few select individuals for eternal happiness; and since all men were equally sinful, He had arranged that His Son should be put to death in requital for the sins, not of the world, but of the elect; and had announced that the elect might earn their pardon by believing on Jesus Christ. To any objections against this scheme Calvin replied that God's ways were incomprehensible to man, that man must not judge his Maker, and that, as the Bible could not contradict itself, any words of mercy in the New Testament must be interpreted in the light of threatenings of vengeance in the Old Testament.

It was an excellent fighting creed. A good Calvinist knew that he was going to heaven and his enemies to hell. Moreover, it appealed to those instincts of destruction which civilization represses. Calvinism was a creed of destruction: everything not authorized in the Bible was wicked; so down must come cathedrals, organs, pictures, images, and stained-glass windows; into the fire must go mass-book and prayer-book, vestment and rosary; dances, festivals, and holidays were inventions of the Evil One; card-playing and songs, beautiful clothes and palaces and stage-plays were not allowed by Scripture. All through history there have been periodic outbursts of nihilism. The Calvinists were the Bolsheviks of their day; they had the same joyless self-complacency, the same fanaticism. But when they were in power, as in New England, and could no longer pose as martyrs who on the Day of Judgment would enjoy revenge, then Calvinism decayed.

Important modifications in Calvin's theology had to be made at once. To Calvin the conversion which qualified a man to enter heaven meant the acquisition of saving faith; and saving faith was merely a feeling of assurance that one was elect. Good conduct was a wholly irrelevant consideration. As a matter of fact, said Calvin, at the same time as God injected faith into the soul, He also injected a respect for morality; but the concurrence was unimportant; many people who behaved admirably would go to hell. This curious doctrine, besides being logically absurd, was a danger to society: it produced dozens of crazy heretics who scoffed at people who spoke highly of morality as being unconverted; such for example was Mrs. Hutchinson. The danger was increased by Calvin's refusal to distinguish between the will and the lower emotions. This side of Calvinism became important in Edwards's lifetime. But in the seventeenth century the theologians juggled with the word "faith"; they made it mean the love of God and the desire to please Him by obeying His law; and conversion, of which people had to make a public profession before they could become church members, meant a sober decision to do this.

In many ways, however, the New Englanders were not recognizably Christian; they propitiated God, by keeping His Sabbath and honoring His name, not so much to escape hellfire as to reap good harvests and catch many fish; for this they found ample precedent in the Old Testament. National calamities, they believed, were always the result of wickedness: if the Indians sacked a town, or if the crops were ruined by rain, it was because they had omitted to whip the Quakers, or because some of them had drunk healths and eaten mince pies at Christmas, both of which customs had been invented by the pagans and practiced by the papists; a great many otherwise intelligent persons believed that the misfortunes of the Andros government were directly attributable to the wearing of periwigs.

As to the connection between personal misfortune and disobedience to God, there was greater doubt. The Jews had been worried by the same problem, as the Book of Job bears witness. However, the New Englanders felt that in general any natural catastrophe was a punishment for wickedness; when a man's cow fell over a precipice, it showed that he had too great desire for riches; when a man's wife was smitten with disease or his son drowned in a well, it was a reproof from God for loving them too much. When the Reverend David Hall's wife had painful birth-pangs, he concluded that it was because he had omitted to pray to God for a quick delivery; when Samuel Sewall was afflicted with diarrhœa, he realized at once that God was administering a reprimand because he had not prayed with his servant the day before. To the average New Englander there was no difference between ordinary and extraordinary judgments: if a man drank away his savings and fell into poverty, or if while he was drunk a thunderbolt fell upon his barn and destroyed it, it was in either case a sign that God disapproved of drunkenness. Particularly striking was the ingenuity of the Deity in making the punishment fit the crime; indeed the clergy worked out a kind of system of sins and reprimands; thus, when it thundered, that was God revealing His anger against profane swearers; an earthquake, on the other hand, was for the particular reproof of drunkards, God making the earth to reel in mockery of their reeling when they were drunk.

These were the beliefs of the educated classes. The superstition of the common people belonged to an earlier stratum of human culture—the magical. Even Cotton Mather was appalled by it: they used, he says, to "cure hurts with spells, and practise detestable conjurations with sieves, and keys, and pease, and nails, and horse-shoes." In the eighteenth century the fisher-girls were still dropping hobnails into boiling fat under a new moon in order to see their future husbands; all the common people believed in witchcraft, and there was an authentic witch at Brookfield in the age of Jefferson and Channing. An episode related in the Essex Court Records shows how Calvinist doctrine affected the laity: one Sabbath morning a drunkard was trying to rape a girl; a fellow citizen caught him in the act; naturally he made an exclamation of disgust. Was it rape and drunkenness that horrified him? Not at all. What he said was "You must not do soe on the Sabbath Day."

Frazer's "Golden Bough" shows how primitive people use magical ceremonies for promoting fertility in animals and crops; after a while, when they realize that their magic is unsuccessful, they postulate supernatural beings who must be propitiated. The New Englanders used religion as a device for getting good harvests. In 1693 the people of Manchester wrote down their reasons for calling a minister: if they settled a minister and paid him a big salary, God would bless them, and there would be plenty to eat for everybody. In 1749 the crops needed rain, and the Reverend Peter Clark of Danvers refused to pray for it; his parishioners were furious with him; one is reminded of many a tale of primitive villagers deposing their priest and throwing their god into a duckpond.

The most lasting result of this mental attitude was the exaltation of the commercial virtues. If God rewarded his servants with riches, then He must approve of those qualities which produced riches. Idleness became one of the worst of vices. Nothing about the Red Indians shocked the Puritans quite so badly as their dislike of work; the Reverend John Eliot went and told them that they were going to hell when they died, but that if only they would settle in a town and work like the Puritans, God would reward them with many possessions. The New Englanders became known very soon for their commercial sharpness, and foreign visitors complained that they never paid their debts; the pious Puritan merchants probably hoped that God would release them by striking their creditors wtih thunderbolts.

A few persons in eastern Massachusetts took an interest in science, and the result was curious; they accepted the hypotheses of Galileo and Newton, and reconciled them with their superstition. Earthquakes and thunderstorms had natural causes: nevertheless they were, like everything else, the work of God, and hence were just as much a reproof for sin. In 1683 Increase Mather, the leading Boston clergyman, wrote a book about comets: he accepted the theory that the earth went round the sun; nevertheless he thought it probable that God had so planned the world that comets and catastrophes always occurred together; he proceeded to show how every comet in recorded history had been followed by a disaster. This work inspires the reflection that there is always some disaster happening somewhere. Increase Mather and his son Cotton collected strange scientific phenomena with enthusiasm; it did not occur to them that science might destroy their religion. They also arranged for a tabulation of special providences, when God had intervened to save a Puritan or punish a wrongdoer, in order that His methods in governing the world might be ascertained with scientific accuracy. The gem of their collection was an episode which had befallen Mr. Eaton, the first governor of Connecticut; he had been sent on an embassy to the king of Denmark; the king called for wine, in order that they might drink healths; now Mr. Eaton, being a good Puritan, had a conscientious objection to health-drinking, since it had no scriptural warrant and had been invented by pagans; he was therefore in great perplexity; God however relieved him from his dilemma by striking down the king of Denmark in a fit. Nevertheless, for the Mathers God ruled by scientific law; He was not the blundering despot of the earlier Puritans, who was continually dispensing in special cases with His general laws, because He found that they caused hardships; but His scientific law was so arranged that it prospered the virtuous and destroyed the wicked.

By 1721 this compromise between religion and science was no longer satisfying the educated classes, and the specifically Christian elements in Calvinism were disappearing along with the superstition. The ministers still prayed for rain and the farmers came to meeting with their great-coats, confident that the prayer would be answered; but educated people were realizing that, whatever the Old Testament might say, it was impossible for a miraculous change in climatic conditions to take place within a couple of hours as a result of a prayer. They were noticing also that the lightning hit the towers of meeting houses more often than other buildings, a very puzzling fact if it was God who wielded the lightning; some of them did not accept Cotton Mather's explanation that it was the devil, and not God, who had power over lightning.

Infidelity of various kinds was increasing rapidly in

Boston, and the Mathers fought a losing battle against liberalism. In the very year in which Edwards was converted Benjamin Franklin's elder brother started a newspaper in order to pour scorn on clericalism and superstition; he and his friends had a gay time, scoffing at the provincial bigotry of New England, writing elegant descriptions of the prostitutes who patrolled the Common, composing little rimes about the vanity of clergymen. The rich merchants and lawyers became Episcopalians, or went on Sabbath mornings to Brattle Street, where there was no distinction between those who publicly professed to have been saved from hell and those who merely hoped they would be, unlike the old-fashioned village churches where gentlemen and servant girls and negro slaves would all get up and describe God's dealings with their souls. The country districts were more conservative; but all over eastern New England the upper classes were becoming liberals or complete skeptics.

Few of the ministers made much effort to stop the decay; they repeated the well-worn phrases which they had learned from Ames's "Medulla" while they were at college. Many of them were worldly people; they worked on their farms all the week; or engaged in trade to supplement their slender incomes; and when they met their friends they spent an evening in smoking and drinking and exchanging reminiscences; indeed the levity of ministers' meetings became a scandal. They were mostly well-behaved: few of them got drunk; and the belief of profane persons that clergymen are often habitual adulterers has only very slight support in the annals of New England. But they were apt to regard any effort to convert their parishioners as hopeless.

In 1728 there was a brief return to old-fashioned religion in eastern Massachusetts. On the evening of Sunday, October 24th, at twenty minutes past eleven, there was an earthquake; for several minutes there was a noise like the rattling of many coaches; chimneys and walls were thrown down, springs destroyed, and chasms a foot wide opened in the ground. The Bostonians thought the Day of Judgment had come, and they rushed to their meeting houses in a last-minute effort to save themselves from hell-fire; they cowered in prayer all night; and next day there were solemn services of intercession, at which the ministers explained how dreadfully angry God must be with His New England. Converts were numbered by fifties and hundreds; female converts were particularly numerous. But a few weeks later the Bostonians began to feel that they had been hoaxed; they were in no imminent danger of going to hell; and they improved the occasion by seeking pleasure even more wholeheartedly than before.

Connecticut and western Massachusetts were still orthodox, though apathetic; but sooner or later they would imitate Boston.

At this crisis Edwards was converted. His lifework was to rebuild the old Calvinism from its foundations. He believed neither the old superstition that if God were angry He would ruin the harvest, nor the new liberalism which identified religion with sober living; what he preached was a more rigorous Puritanism, a sterner self-surrender, which was congenial enough to a scholar and mystic like himself, but which, when imposed on other people, ended in tyranny and repression.

# CHAPTER V

## THE YOUNG CHRISTIAN

DURING the next few years a proud man mortified his pride, and a passionate man strove to live even more passionately, because he loved his newly discovered God. Edwards's schooling of himself in the ways of Christianity is recorded in his resolutions, and in the diary which he kept from 1722 to 1725.

Passion was congenial enough. His resolution, now as before, was "to live with all my might, while I do live," and "never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can." His dreams of worldly fame slipped away almost imperceptibly, and he accepted without question a future as the minister of a New England village; his ambition now was "to endeavour to obtain for myself as much happiness, in the other world, as I possibly can, with all the power, might, vigour, and vehemence, yea violence, I am capable of, or can bring myself to exert, in any way that can be thought of." He planned his life carefully, in order to secure the utmost spiritual fervor, eating and drinking very moderately, and asking himself every night whether he had at all exceeded. He had to complain often of dullness and listlessness, until it seemed to him that, by comparison with the singlemindedness after which he panted, he had "bottomless depths of secret corruption and deceit" within his heart. When he considered his own depravity, which he was now for the first time discovering, and compared it with the ineffable beauty and power of his ideal, then the justice of God in condemning human beings to hell became visible. Yet in his effort to transform himself from a man to a vehicle for the spirit of God, nobody was ever more successful.

Pride was a more difficult problem. He had an "inclination, which is not agreeable to Christian sweetness of temper and conversation; either too much dogmaticalness or too much egoism, a disposition to manifest my own dislike and scorn, and my own freedom from those which are innocent, sinless, yea common infirmities of men." His parents suffered from his brusqueness of temper; and he schooled himself to display an invariable benevolence of speech and expression. Yet in the outcome his pride was merely transferred from himself to God; when he was convinced that he knew God's will—and the Spirit spoke so strongly through him that he never doubted that his own ideal was also God's—then he never concealed his scorn for human beings who, on the edge of eternity, could fritter away their time on carnal pleasures.

These and a dozen other weaknesses he ferreted out from his personality; and he even studied his dreams, to find out what were his secret inclinations.

At this time the consciousness of God's presence was with him always. He read continually the Song of Songs, and had visions of himself alone in the mountains, far from all mankind and swallowed up in God; the love of God would often flare up, like a sweet burning in his heart. He saw God's glory "in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water and all nature." He would often watch the moon and the clouds, and would sing of his Master as the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valleys. The thunder and the lightnings gave him especial delight. Year after year he spent most of his time in thinking of divine things, walking alone in the woods and across the pastures.

After two years as a graduate student he went for nine months to preach to a congregation in New York. The Presbyterian Church was at the corner of Wall Street and Broad Way; but Edwards's congregation was a small group which had separated from it. He remembered this as the happiest period of his life. He lodged with a young man and his mother to whom he became passionately devoted. He would walk through the streets of the old Dutch town, with their cobblestones so sharp that pedestrians had to tread carefully, and out into the meadows by the Hudson; and in the peace of Manhattan Island he would think of the soul of a true Christian as like a little white flower in the spring of the year, and would pant after more complete surrender to God.

His father's desire and the memory of a young lady in New Haven drew him back to Connecticut; and on a Friday morning, after "a most bitter parting" with his friends, he set sail for home; they put in at Westchester the first night, and spent the next night and the Sabbath at Saybrook; on Tuesday he reached Wethersfield; and the next day rode home to Windsor. But sometimes he felt his heart "ready to sink" at the thought of his friends in New York, five days' journey away.

He was now for two years a tutor at Yale. The activity of Jeremiah Dummer had produced an unexpected effect. Timothy Cutler had "increased in learning" in a way which his pupil had not expected; he had been rummaging among the books which Dummer had collected, and had found, and read, a number of treatises in defense of Anglicanism; in 1722, on the day after Commencement, he met the trustees of the college in his study and informed them that he and several of his colleagues had decided to sail for London to be ordained by a bishop. It was the biggest bombshell in the history of New England. The Connecticut ministers had forgotten the arguments against bishops, and were terrified of having to argue with scholars like Cutler; Anglicans seemed to be springing up everywhere, and they had not the least idea how to reconvert them. They hurriedly wrote to Boston, where the ministers had been arguing with Anglican parishioners for thirty years, and asked Cotton Mather for books and methods of confutation. Unfortunately the Governor of Connecticut was confident that the apostates could not stand up against good Calvinist dialectic; before Cotton Mather had replied, he arranged a debate, with himself as chairman. The result was quite different from his expectation: the Anglicans paraded arguments for episcopacy which the Calvinist champions had never heard before; when Cutler informed them that if they rejected bishops they must reject also infant baptism, all that the disgruntled Congregationalists could do was to lose their tempers; after listening to many "irritating remarks" and much "rhetorical declamation" the disappointed Governor was compelled to save their faces by ending the debate.

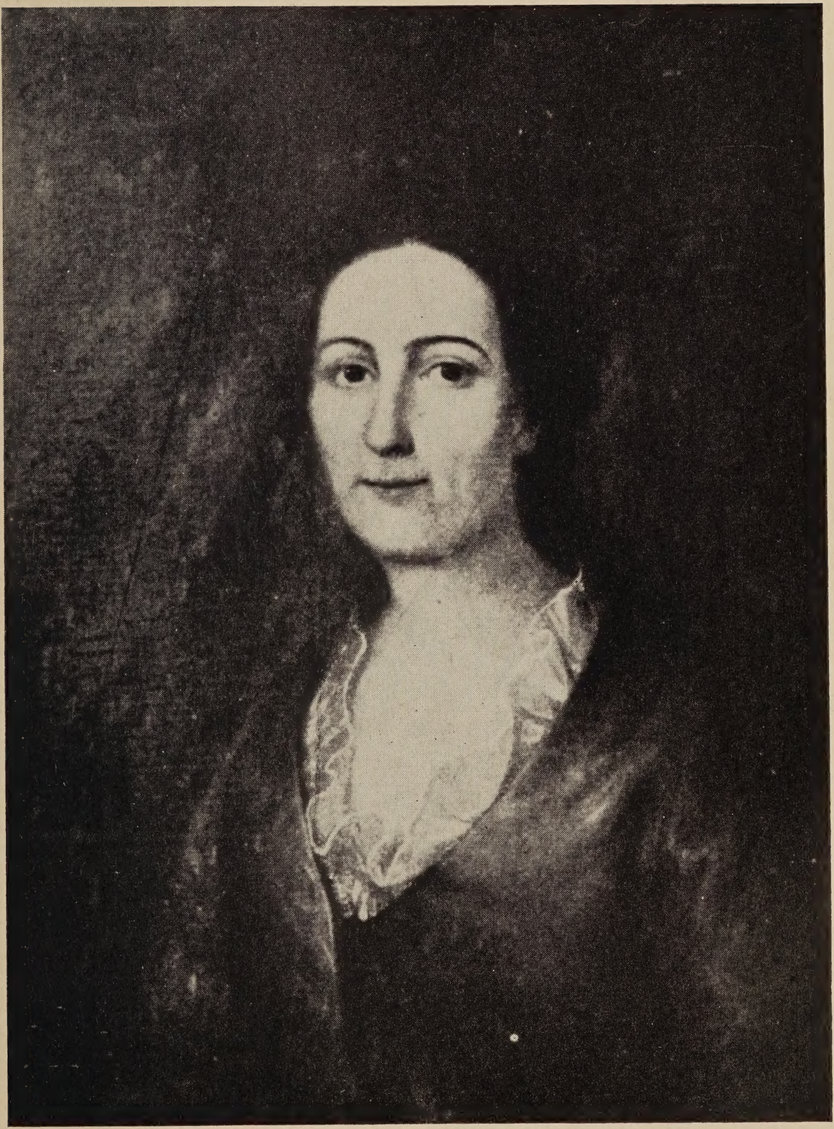
Yale was once more in jeopardy; and the trustees arranged to exercise the rectorship by turns, one month each. The real authority rested with the tutors, and for two years Edwards was in control. He strongly disliked the "despondencies, fears, perplexities, multitudes of cares, and distraction of mind" which his office brought him, and complained that his studies and religious ardors were interrupted; it was work for which he felt himself wholly unfitted; nevertheless, he seems to have performed it with success. His duties were interrupted by a serious illness, which detained him at North Haven while he was on his way home; for three months his mother nursed him there; often he and his attendants, after lying awake all night, would watch the first faint streaks of dawn from the window, which seemed to him like God's glory lighting up the world.

In 1726 Elisha Williams was elected rector of Yale; and Edwards accepted a call to Northampton, as colleague to his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard. Stoddard died in 1729, and Edwards was to remain minister of the town until 1750.

Northampton lay up the Connecticut River, in the center of a broad bowl of flat meadowland, with the twin peaks of Tom and Holyoke guarding the passage of the river two miles to the south; on the east and west the hills rose more gradually. It was the chief town of western Massachusetts; and Stoddard had been one of the most prominent personalities of his generation; he was nicknamed "the pope;" and it is reported that once, when an ambushed Frenchman was about to kill him, he was deterred by his Indian companions, who told him that that was the Englishman's God. He belonged to an age that had almost gone, an age when clergymen walked abroad in full clerical costume, and openly boasted that they ruled their people; his parish allowed him privileges which Edwards was never to enjoy.

A few months later Edwards was married to Sarah Pierpont, daughter of the former minister of New Haven; she was seventeen years of age, and, by universal testimony, uncommonly beautiful.

When he was at New York, he had written, on a blank leaf of a notebook: "They say there is a young lady in New Haven who is beloved of that Great Being, who made and rules the world, and that there are certain seasons in which this Great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her and fills her mind with exceeding great delight. . . .



(*From a contemporary portrait.*)

MRS. SARAH PIERPONT EDWARDS

She is of a wonderful sweetness, calmness and universal benevolence of mind; especially after this Great God has manifested himself to her mind. She will sometimes go about from place to place, singing sweetly; and seems always full of joy and pleasure; and no one knows for what. She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have some one invisible always conversing with her."

Two years later one of Edwards's sisters wrote to a friend that he was reported to be engaged, "you may guess" with whom. He was eager to be married; "Patience," he told his sweetheart, with typical Puritan restraint, "is usually regarded as a virtue, but in this case I think it may almost be considered as a vice."

Whether there was dancing at his ordination has not been recorded. Presumably all the ministers and ministers' wives in the neighborhood rode into Northampton and spent several days in feasting and drinking and smoking; a New England ordination might cost anything up to one hundred pounds, and usually included the consumption of twenty or thirty gallons of wine, half a dozen gallons of brandy and rum, and several barrels of cider and beer. And one learned brother preached, and a second gave the right hand of fellowship, and a third prayed; and there were mutual congratulations all round. But if the farmers and merchants of Northampton had seen into the mind of their new minister, with his vision of God's terrific drama, of the flames of hell lapping and hissing beneath their feet, and a heaven of eternal ecstasy glittering far above them, then surely they would have seized him and carried him outside their boundaries, rather than allow him to be their minister.

# BOOK TWO

## THE PARISH MINISTER

# CHAPTER VI

## THE SINS OF NORTHAMPTON

THE Pauline Deity whom Edwards worshiped had little in common with the Jehovah of his parishioners. The people of Northampton were close to the soil; their lives had a fragrant earthy tang, a savor of harvesting and feasting, of drinking and giving in marriage. Removed by a century from the severity of the fathers of New England, they had mastered, and grown familiar with, the land which they inhabited; existence was no longer a bitter struggle with the malign forces of a hostile continent; America had ceased to be the preserve of the devil, it was their home. Village life in New England was steadily assuming the lineaments of village life in the Old World; they still sanctified the Sabbath, and shunned any custom invented by papist or pagan; they had all the gritty individualism of the New England temperament; yet their Old Testament Jehovah was not wholly unlike the Pan or the Dionysus of old-time rural festivals. This was the full-blooded New England of Ethan Allen and Daniel Webster, not the later New England of hellfire visions and millennial dreams, of crazy virgins and decaying farms and degenerate fanaticism.

Village life the whole world over is monotonous. The people of Northampton rose at sunrise; they ate a breakfast of bread and milk, or bread and cider, with a cornmeal pudding, served in pewter or wooden dishes, with wooden spoons; forks were coming into use, but old-fashioned people still ate with their fingers, and wiped them on napkins, of which there were fifty or a hundred in every household; in the poorer families there was one large dish, into which everybody dipped their fingers, the maidservant and the negro slave as well as the master and mistress. After breakfast the men went out into the fields, while the women cooked food and wove cloth. At noon the meeting house bell was rung, and everybody trooped home for a dinner of meat and vegetables, preceded by another cornmeal pudding; potatoes they avoided, as being an aphrodisiac. In the afternoon more work until nightfall, when there was a supper of cold meat and bread and milk. Then bed. This, year in and year out, through sowing and reaping, lambing and shearing, was the normal life in nine-tenths of the three hundred families in Northampton.

Ancestry or achievement marked out a few above the rest; for society was still quite undemocratic, and Northampton even possessed a "squire," like a village in the Old World. The Stoddards, the Hawleys, the Dwights, and the Pomeroys were some of the big families of Northampton; they received deference and the chief seats in the meeting house. The heads of these families worked, like other people, as farmers or merchants; but they supplied officers for the militia and justices for the county court; they rode up to Boston as deputies to the General Assembly, or to put their daughters to school, and would dine with the Governor or the Boston ministers; they bought the latest literature from the bookshops on Cornhill, and had their coats (but not their vests or kneebreeches) made by Boston tailors. Most of them were probably considered by the polite Bostonians as uncouth provincials; but in Northampton there was one man, Colonel John Stoddard, diplomatist and Indian fighter, who was among the most important men in Massachusetts, the trusted friend of several royal governors; he was Edwards's uncle, and as his religious opinions were staunchly Calvinist, Edwards admired him enormously; he asked his advice about all the details of church government, and must have talked with him often about the news from Boston. Stoddard's support was invaluable to the young minister; for, as the leading "river god," he was much the most powerful man in western Massachusetts. But the gentry in general, having been educated at Harvard, were inclined to liberalism, and apt to think of religion as a matter of service-going, Bible-reading, and good conduct.

For the common people religion was a recreation. Every Sabbath morning the farmers put on their check shirts and red coats, mounted their horses, with their wives behind them, and galloped to the meeting house, sometimes racing each other to the door; in the winter they carried little footstoves with live coals inside them, which were always in danger of setting the meeting house on fire. A prayer, a psalm, a scripture exposition, and a sermon formed the service; whenever the congregation stood up or sat down there was a noisy banging of seats; the psalm was an uncouth rime, sung out of tune, and so drearily that people sometimes paused for breath twice in the same note; the sermon was often accompanied by the snores of part of the congregation. At noon the farmers camped out in the fields and ate dinner, while their children shouted and threw stones which broke the meeting house windows. In the afternoon there was another service.

Service-going may seem a strange kind of recreation; certainly large numbers of people stayed away, for by this time nobody thought of enforcing the laws which made attendance compulsory; moreover, it is plain, from court records, that sermon-time was the favorite opportunity of thieves and adulterers. But the farmers could meet their friends outside the meeting house; and from the prayer and the sermon they could often learn the latest political news from Boston and London.

Training-day was doubtless a more popular amusement. Once a quarter all the able-bodied males assembled in the fields, to learn how to defend their families against the Indians. And after briefly exhibiting their incapacity for corporate action, they all hurried into the taverns and devoted the evening to getting drunk.

Not that the Indian danger was insignificant. In 1723 war broke out, and chief Grey Lock, from his headquarters in Canada, made many marauding expeditions against the

Connecticut Valley towns; his men were always lurking somewhere in the woods, waiting to spring out on unwary farmers. In August, 1723, he killed two men at Northfield, and three at Rutland; and in October another in the Northfield meadows. Next year he came still nearer to Northampton, and slew two men who were making hay near Hatfield; the militia marched out to catch him, but were ambuscaded near Deerfield, and three of them were killed. Nobody ought to have gone into the fields unguarded; nevertheless four farmers of Northampton gaily drove out to gather flax; they were attacked, and one was killed. Next year a peace was patched up; but the ambitions of a king in central Europe, or the quarrels of traders on the banks of the Ganges might at any moment bring a horde of savages down the valley, burning, killing, and scalping. The massacre at Deerfield was still fresh in everyone's memory; many of the people of Northampton had lost relatives there, and there was still living in the town a woman who had actually been scalped and left for dead.

But neither hellfire nor Indians prevented them from enjoying themselves. Like all primitive people, they counterbalanced the monotony of their daily lives with an occasional feast; a wedding, a funeral, or a barn-raising would be an excuse for a banquet and an enormous consumption of liquor; the revelry would last far into the night, so that the minister had to leave his bed and come down to remind them that God's children always went to sleep when it was dark; for it was deeply ingrained in the New England consciousness that there was something suspicious about staying up at night, and usually the constables made their rounds and apprehended anybody whom they caught night-walking or merrymaking. Any unusual labor was an excuse for drinking, and the capacity of the New Englanders suggests that the human race must have degenerated: when in Northampton in 1737 a new meeting house was built sixty men worked on it for a week; during that week they consumed sixty-nine gallons of rum with thirty-six pounds of sugar, besides several barrels of beer and a number of barrels of cider; nevertheless no accidents occurred.

The young people, at least in Edwards's opinion, lived a life almost wholly devoted to enjoyment. On Sabbath evenings at sunset they would ride off to a farmhouse or to a distant tavern, the girls mounted behind the boys; and there they would stay until the small hours of the morning, drinking and dancing and singing songs which, according to Edwards, were licentious and indecent. The graver citizens disliked these "frolicks," but among the younger generation they were universal. They made eyes at each other in sermon-time on the Sabbath, a practice which the short-sighted Mr. Stoddard did not observe; and corn-husking and hay-making were excuses for especially riotous frolicking.

Bundling, in Northampton and the western towns, was universal, and people laughed at anybody who condemned it. This practice, indigenous to New England, seems to have originated about the end of the seventeenth century. A young couple who had no place to do their courting used to sleep on the same bed; they did not undress completely, and the girl was often trussed up in a costume made for the purpose. Marriage did not necessarily follow; and it was not uncommon for a girl to bundle with a complete stranger. Some people declared that the custom was entirely harmless: as one rimester said,

> "Let coat and shift be turned adrift,
> And breeches take their flight,
> An honest man and virgin can
> Lie quiet all the night."

But whether bundling swains won more applause for self-control or for a conquest is unknown. Certainly conception regularly preceded marriage. In a pioneer country, where children were valuable, it is not surprising that a man and a woman should have made sure of their mutual fertility before binding themselves to each other. In theory fornication was a crime, punishable at the rate of thirty-three shillings and fourpence per person; but though in a few places people were still being fined for anticipating marriage at the very height of the War of Independence, the law had become in most places a dead-letter early in the eighteenth century. Probably in Northampton, as certainly elsewhere, most people did not disapprove when a child was born in the seventh month after marriage.

Edwards had a hard task in front of him. Many of the ministers condoned sexual irregularity: in theory a child conceived out of wedlock could not be baptized unless the parents expressed penitence for their sin, but in many churches this did not apply to seven-month children. Many ministers saw no harm in bundling; there has survived the diary of a candidate for ordination, later a successful minister, who had four love affairs in succession, and bundled with the third of his inamoratas, as he adds discreetly in Latin, "magna cum voluptate;" and another minister tells in his diary how he and a friend were detained for the night at a strange town and had to sleep in the same bed, and found when they awoke next morning that the other bed in the room had been occupied by the landlord's daughter and her swain.

When a couple, after repeated bundlings, had selected each other for marriage, they seem usually to have been well-behaved. Ministers were liable to refer in a vague way to the great prevalence of adultery; there was probably in every town at least one woman who was promiscuous; women were often dragged before the county justices for giving birth to bastards, and were required to name their partners in sin, in order that they might share in the support of the children; and women sometimes went with Indians. But these were all exceptional cases. Moralists bewailed the laxity with which the laws were enforced: the law punishing adultery with death had become a dead-letter, because juries refused to convict a couple of more than "light carriage," even when caught in the act; and loose women were no longer whipped because executioners refused to whip them, preferring to pay fines themselves. In reality, however, New England's morals were healthier than in 1630, partly because there was less repression, partly because the remarkably vicious servants whom many of the planters had brought with them had given place to native hired men; in the eighteenth century, unlike the seventeenth, there seems to have been no bestiality and very little rape. Edwards's chief problem was to dam up the natural instincts of the young people.

Frolicking, drunkenness, and bundling were the most serious of his problems; but quarrelsomeness was scarcely less difficult. The obstinate individualism which had made the first New Englanders dissenters had been doubled in each generation; only now, for lack of a Laud, these village Hampdens quarrelled with each other or with their ministers. The illustrations of this proclivity in the annals of New England are frequent and entertaining.

Whenever a new meeting house was built its position, shape, and seating were fruitful sources of dissension. A town covered a number of square miles, and each household wanted the meeting house as close to its door as possible; a surveyor was frequently hired to find the mathematical center of a parish; but even so a schism would smoulder on for a dozen years, until the old meeting house collapsed in ruins, and the building of a new one could be delayed no longer. A majority decision was rarely accepted, and on several occasions a baffled minority chopped down a newly erected meeting house by night. After this they usually appealed to the General Assembly for a division of the parish; but the majority fought the proposal vigorously, as it would involve paying the salaries of two ministers instead of one; and the plaintive voice of the existing minister would then be heard above the tumult, pointing out that, as it was, his salary was not being paid, and he was living on his inheritance.

Once the position of the meeting house was settled, and the important question decided of whether it should be square or rectangular, there remained the problem of allotting the seats. A committee was elected to arrange them in order of dignity; and another committee to fit the inhabitants to the seats, taking into consideration wealth, rank, age, and usefulness; these onerous duties were given to the chief men in the church, and occupied several days. However, it often happened that a decision was not accepted; and the next Sabbath a swarm of angry housewives, whose claims to social distinction had been ignored, clambered over the tops of pews into the places which they coveted.

When ecclesiastical affairs supplied no fuel, neighbors quarreled with each other individually. The law courts were continually hearing slander suits, one goodwife complaining that another goodwife had called her a witch or a "lousie slut" or a "tinker's trull and punch and stew;" a bodkin dropped by a goodwife during service, which another goodwife was alleged to have picked up, or a statement by goodman A that the daughter of goodman B had

had intercourse with as many men as he had fingers and toes, would duly bring both parties before the justices at the next quarter-sessions. At other times the church was arbiter: in one village one finds five church meetings through four years discussing the problem of whether a member has told lies about the attachment by the sheriff of the deacon's banyan-tree; unable to solve it, they call in a council of delegates from seven other churches; then for three more years they quarrel as to who should pay for the entertainment of the council.

At Northampton the natural quarrelsomeness of the inhabitants found outlet in a regular party system, which Edwards compared to the division between Whigs and Tories in England. One party represented wealth and the other numbers. The theme of the quarrel was provided by the commissions which divided the common lands, and allotted the expenses of diverting the course of the mill stream; these two topics rent the town for nearly seventy years. The feud was liable to break out in the decision of almost anything, civil or religious; and on one occasion, after a fierce debate about a religious question, a member of one party assaulted the leader of the other and beat him mercilessly. ✓

No minister at that period found his work easy. The theocracy had gone; and though the clergy were respected for their superior knowledge of scripture and the world, their wishes were often flouted; they depended on the good will of their parishes for financial support; and if they tried to have their way too often they were thwarted at church meetings, and their salaries were left unpaid; these simple devices were usually enough to curb any superciliousness or any effort to wipe out frolicking and drunkenness.

In Edwards, however, Northampton encountered a minister who would neither surrender nor compromise: either he would compel his parish to obey the God he served, or else they must expel him. His dominating traits were an absolute faith in the rightness of his own beliefs, and a sober realism which never evaded or sentimentalized the most unpleasant facts.

At first they worshiped him. They could not appreciate his subtle logic, his sensitivity to all the nuances of spiritual emotion, his luminous and impassioned style. But as they became accustomed to his tall slim figure riding along the streets of Northampton, as they noted his sweetness and good temper, and the presence, always shining visibly on his face, of the grace of God, they began to feel that he belonged to a superior order of beings. He never jested or talked about trivial matters; the most that he permitted himself was a smile of irony or a dry humor; he seemed utterly absorbed in the high issues of eternity, not forgetting for a single moment the brevity of life and its terrible importance; even when he discussed the latest political news from Europe, his anxiety was always to trace in it the workings of Providence and the approach of Christ's kingdom.

This passionate admiration Edwards aroused to the end of his life in those who shared his beliefs and would meet him on his own level. But in others he provoked an equally passionate hatred: and by his impatience with heretics, with whom he could barely refrain from angry words, his contempt for human nature, his absent-mindedness, his inability to make pleasant conversation, his perpetual seriousness, his utter refusal to tolerate the weaknesses of the flesh in himself or in anybody else, the number of those who hated him was steadily increased.

# CHAPTER VII

## FIRST MOVEMENT OF GOD'S SPIRIT

THOSE elements in his personality which Edwards tried to eradicate were reproduced in the daily life of other people. Loathing his own dullness, his distraction by worldly problems, the wicked impulses which leapt into his mind as if the devil had suggested them, he hated the same weaknesses in his parishioners; to his eyes they were walking on the very crust of the pit of torment.

Every Sabbath the young man climbed into his pulpit and preached to them about the realities of the unseen world. God, he told them, was a being of infinite purity, who required of man an infinite obedience; the slightest sin made man worthy of an infinite punishment; for man to protest that he was good on the whole and therefore worthy of happiness on the whole was as if a queen were to tell her husband that she performed the duties of wife for most of the time and only occasionally committed adultery with slaves and scoundrels. It was impossible for any man to realize the moral perfection of God's law; and therefore they must pray for that converting grace which would qualify them, despite their unworthiness, for a place in heaven.

Sometimes he told them, in language of great beauty, about the joys of the Christian life: how the grace of God, lighting up the soul, was something of which the unconverted man could have no conception, any more than a deaf man could realize the beauty of music, or a blind man could appreciate the colors of a rainbow. But as this method of preaching could have no effect on unconverted persons, he told them more often about the hell for which they were destined.

"To help your conception," he would say to them, "imagine yourself to be cast into a fiery oven, all of a glowing heat, or into the midst of a glowing brick-kiln, or of a great furnace, where your pain would be as much greater than that occasioned by accidentally touching a coal of fire, as the heat is greater. Imagine also that your body were to lie there for a quarter of an hour, full of fire, all the while full of quick sense; what horror would you feel at the entrance of such a furnace! And how long would that quarter of an hour seem to you! If it were to be measured by a glass, how long would that glass seem to be running! And after you had endured it for one minute, how overbearing would it be to you to think that you had to endure the other fourteen! But what would be the effect on your soul, if you knew you must lie there enduring that torment to the full for twenty-four hours! And how much greater would be the effect, if you knew you must endure it for a whole year; and how vastly greater still, if you knew you must endure it for a thousand years! O then, how would your heart sink, if you thought, if you knew, that you must bear it forever and ever! That there would be no end! That after millions of millions of ages, your torment would be no nearer to an end, than ever it was; and that you never, never should be delivered."

Such preaching had never been heard before in New England. There had been precedents in the Middle Ages, but the hellfire sermons of the friars were embellished by a grotesque exuberance of fancy which made them less terrific than those of Edwards.

Undoubtedly there was sadism in these broodings over the future destiny of his congregation. Edwards was fascinated by his belief that God led men to damnation through the natural exercise of their faculties, just as he had been fascinated by the notion that the spiders were destroyed by their gift of flight. There was something sinister in him, the morbid strain which had driven his relatives to murder and would make of his grandson a libertine and a would-be Napoleon; but in Edwards it was the servant of his will, and can hardly, therefore, be called a fault.

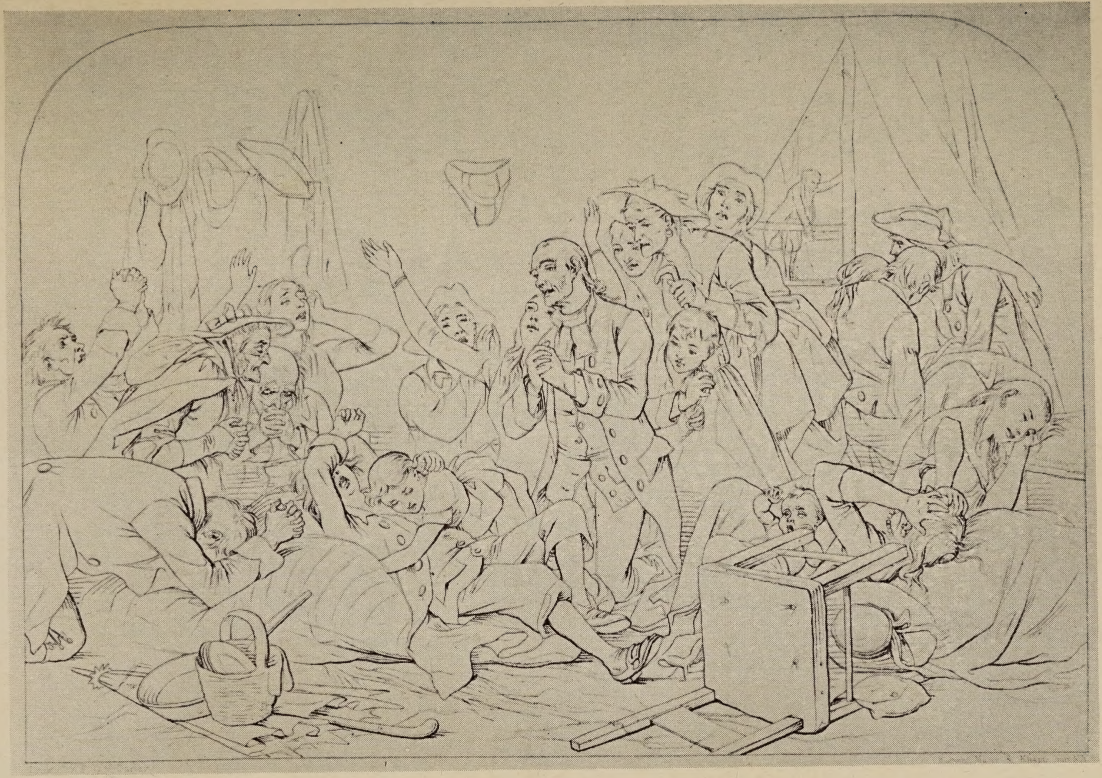
Certainly hellfire had no part in Edwards's own conversion, it answered no requirement of his religious psychology; his personal narrative makes this plain. But here a terrible suspicion suggests itself: perhaps hellfire did satisfy a desire, but of a different kind; perhaps Edwards accepted it with less reluctance because of a craving in another part of his nature, a craving which he failed to understand and attributed to God instead of to Satan.

The congregation, listening week after week to these outpourings from a young man who seemed superior to ordinary human weaknesses, grew steadily more and more serious. They gave up night-walking and tavern-haunting; they no longer ogled each other indecently in the meeting house; frolicks became rarer and rarer. In the fall of 1733 the young people agreed to hold no more merry parties on the evening after the Sabbath. In the spring of the next year a young man was taken with a sudden and violent attack of pleurisy, which made him immediately delirious and killed him within two days; the awful realization that one of their number had actually gone to hell made the young people even more thoughtful. Shortly afterwards a young woman died; before her death she was savingly converted, and was very cheerful on her deathbed. Meanwhile a small village three miles from Northampton had been actively attacked by a revival, and many of the inhabitants were converted. In the fall of 1734 the young people began to hold parties, not for pleasure, but for pious conversation about their future destiny.

In December the revival actually began in Northampton, with the conversion of half a dozen persons, including a young lady who had been "one of the greatest company-keepers in the whole town." During the winter and spring of 1735 religion spread like a forest fire. Conversation on any other subject was scarcely tolerated anywhere in Northampton; the whole population, from the oldest to the youngest, was in terror of dropping, any day, into hell; they met together constantly in private houses for prayer and exhortation; and in the meeting house on the Sabbath almost the whole congregation were sometimes in tears at the same time. Six hundred and twenty persons attended the communion services, of whom about three hundred were new converts; by the end of May there were scarcely any adult persons left unconverted. Two of the converts were above seventy years of age; thirty-three of them were less than fourteen years of age; one was a child of four.

When someone was converted, he felt a sincere and selfless love for God and God's law, and surrendered himself happily to whatever fate might have in store for him: one young woman said it was sweet to think of how her dead body would be eaten by worms. The change started with fear of hell; the victim then tried to win peace of mind by the performance of moral duty; he grew more and more miserable, brooding over his acts of sin and the corruption of his nature; he realized that he deserved hell, and that only God could save him; and soon after this realization it usually happened that the light of God's grace broke in upon his soul.

Particularly remarkable was the conversion of a child of four, whose name was Phoebe Bartlet. Hearing the exhortations of her parents to the older children, she used to shut herself up in her room five or six times a day, and was overheard saying, "Pray, Blessed Lord, give me salvation;" she also spoke of her lack of success in finding



(*From a drawing by F. O. C. Darley.*)

A CAMP MEETING

God. One afternoon she went to her mother and burst into tears, saying "I am afraid I shall go to hell;" after weeping for some time, she suddenly smiled and said, "Mother, the kingdom of heaven is come to me;" then she went back to her room, and came out soon afterwards, saying "I can find God now." She called one of her little cousins and told him that heaven was better than earth; and seeing her elder sisters, she went about weeping and crying "Poor Nabby," "Poor Eunice," "Poor Amy;" on being questioned as to why she wept, she replied that she feared Nabby, Eunice, and Amy were going to hell. From this time on she took great delight in going to meeting on the Sabbath and in religious conversation; while her sisters were husking corn, she would warn them that they had not long to live and must be ready for death; when Edwards returned from a long journey, she went about telling the other children with great joy that Mr. Edwards was come home; when a poor man lost his cow, she entreated her father to give him one of theirs; and she was unable to sleep at night, unless she had first said her catechism. Once she was taken by some other children to steal plums from a neighbor's orchard; her mother told her afterwards that that was sinful; whereupon she burst into tears, and even when the owner of the plums gave the children permission to eat what they had taken, she refused to be pacified and was very angry with her sisters for leading her into sin.

This infant Calvinist lived to the age of eighty, and was a good Christian to the end.

Those were great days for the young minister. God had made him an instrument for saving from hellfire in less than six months three hundred souls. Calvinism, with its identification of the will with the lower emotions, and its emphasis on conversion, leads naturally to "orgiastic Christianity;" but only once, on the Scottish moors a century before, had there been any awakening of similar violence in Protestant history. And when the whole town of Northampton gathered in the meeting house and sang the psalms with a new ecstatic fervor, Edwards's heart was ready to break. Frivolity and lewdness were banished utterly; his people did nothing and said nothing which was not for the glory of God; and even at weddings there was no longer any carnal mirth or jollity.

As for the people of Northampton, some of them thought that the end of the world was at hand. The Puritans had always been fond of speculation on this important subject, and an orthodox scheme of interpretation for the prophecies in the Book of Revelation had been worked out. The pope, of course, was Antichrist; and the seven vials which were to be the harbingers of the Millennium had been in process of being opened ever since the Reformation; the first five had been identified to general acceptance, so obviously Christ's second coming could not be far distant; the crux of the problem was the date at which began the twelve hundred and sixty years of Antichrist's reign; and as the years rolled by and the blast which should call the dead from their graves was still unsounded, the date was pushed farther and farther forward. Dr. Increase Mather, who was preëminent in these speculations, was at first inclined to favor 1697 as the date of Christ's return; when this notion proved wrong he hazarded 1736—a year which he did not live to see. So undoubtedly, when in 1735 there were such remarkable movements of God's spirit, many pious and patriotic natives of Northampton must have recalled these eschatological calculations of Increase Mather; and Edwards himself, who was as interested as anybody in the subject, seems to have given some support to the notion.

Meanwhile the news that God was at work in Northampton had spread beyond the limits of the town. Eastern Massachusetts was indifferent, and not a single newspaper mentioned the revival. But in the Connecticut valley they were beginning to talk. At first everybody scoffed: the town of Northampton, they told each other, had gone mad; it had caught religion like an infectious disease; the people were full of wild enthusiastic fancies, seeing visions and imagining that Christ on the cross appeared before their eyes; now they believed that the end of the world was at hand. How could the end of the world begin under the preaching of a young and foolish minister, who could hardly utter a civil how-do-you-do, and who mistook every fresh lunatic for a convert? But many who went to scoff remained to pray; the reports of visitors and the redoubled efforts of ministers soon provoked revivals in other places also; that year no less than twenty-seven other towns were visited by the Spirit; they were scattered over Connecticut and western Massachusetts, and geographical proximity was not in itself enough to spread the contagion.

The revival, however, was not an unmixed blessing; Satan was hard at work, as well as the Holy Ghost. Terror of hellfire was causing religious melancholia. When the religious fervor was at its height somebody tried to commit suicide. A month later Captain Joseph Hawley, one of the chief men of the town, after lying awake at night for a long time, meditating about hellfire, and convinced that God would never save him from it, went completely out of his mind and cut his throat; it is said that when the news was taken to his wife she was making cheese; and that with true New England dourness she refused to go out to see his body until the cheese was finished; but though Mrs. Hawley accepted the suicide as the will of God, the dead man had a son and namesake who did not forget it. The news spread consternation through the town; "multitudes," both in Northampton and elsewhere, felt impulses to do likewise; they seemed to be hearing voices, which cried "Cut your own throat, now is a good opportunity;" suicide was urged upon them with such violence that they had to fight with all their might to resist the temptation. After this two men at Suffield and South Hadley were afflicted with another form of religious mania: they thought they had special revelations from heaven, and that God gave them his commands directly and endowed them with extraordinary gifts for converting others. By the end of 1735 the revival was at an end.

Next year, at the request of a minister in Boston, Edwards wrote a detailed account of the revival, which was sent to the chief dissenting ministers in London, and there printed; for candor and lucidity his narrative could not have been bettered. The London ministers, after reading it, remarked that nothing like it had happened since the days of the apostles. Edwards was of the same opinion.

# CHAPTER VIII

## WARS AMONG THE CLERGY

ONE reason why the revival ended so quickly was the excitement of the Breck case at Springfield. This episode illustrates the bigoted conservatism of the orthodox clergy, including Edwards himself; it also shows how interested all the New Englanders were in the details of theological controversy. Though Edwards was not prominent in it, it was the first act in the drama of his dismissal.

The person most prominently involved was the Reverend Thomas Clap, of Windham. Mr. Clap belonged to a class of men which is common in every age. He united a considerable ability and a complete lack of intelligence; a capable administrator and a learned mathematician, he believed as unalterably true every dogma which he had inherited from his forefathers. For him Thomas Clap was the center of the earth, and whatever Thomas Clap believed was written in the heavens; in defense of orthodoxy or of his personal dignity, he was prepared to make himself hated, to endanger his skin, or to violate honesty and justice; he was hardheaded, hard-hearted, self-satisfied, and energetic, and he never changed his mind about anything. His career was one unending series of quarrels. In appearance he was short, thickset, and dignified; and his words were few but weighty.

The church at Springfield had traveled farther than most from the orthodoxy of its founders; its morals were loose, its Calvinism was mild, and a large majority of the people, including many from the best families, neither became converted nor troubled to have their children baptized. In 1734 they invited to preach to them, as a candidate for settlement, a young man named Robert Breck; he was a brilliant preacher, and a charming and tactful person; and the church agreed to give him a call. Breck had imbibed at Harvard a certain vague tendency to liberalism.

The news soon trickled down to Windham, where Breck had preached a few months before; and Clap immediately became all activity; he enlisted his friends in the good cause, and they industriously circulated reports in Springfield and the neighboring towns that Breck was a disbeliever and a bad character. Breck thereupon sent a furious letter to his accuser: "I took you always to be a Gentleman, and not only so, but a Christian," he said; "What could provoke you to tell such a falsehood I can't imagine;" after hoping that "God will grant you repentance and reformation that so gentlemen may meet with civil treatment who will hereafter come among you," he concluded with an apology for "anything of warmth and passion in this letter." Clap offered no satisfaction; so Breck saddled his horse and rode over to Windham for a personal interview; but an angry argument left both parties still unsatisfied.

Meanwhile the Hampshire ministers, Edwards among them, induced Clap to put in writing some definite charges: this ended the more serious accusations of heresy; but it appeared that Breck had denied the authenticity of two passages in St. John's Gospel, had argued that well-behaved heathen might not necessarily go to hell, had been expelled from Harvard for stealing books from the library, and had never read the New England Confession of Faith. The Hampshire ministers thereupon refused to ordain him; Breck replied that if they would not, there were others who would. But the Springfield church began to have doubts, so Breck rode back to Boston.

The young man undoubtedly had liberal tendencies, though he had made no positive statement by which he could, without absurdity, be convicted of heresy. Edwards, to dispel any taint which his proximity might have caused in Northampton, began preaching sermons on justification by faith alone. Strong passions, however, had been aroused about these technicalities of theology: one of Edwards's cousins, who lived in Hatfield, a soldier named Israel Williams, rode into Northampton and positively forbade him to continue his sermons. Edwards told him bluntly that he was the best judge of his own business. For this rebuke Israel Williams never forgave him.

The people of Springfield were true New Englanders, and would not endure dictation from anybody; having thought the matter over, they gave Breck another call; and a paper signed by Edwards and his colleagues, which recommended them to avoid so dangerous a heretic, was ignored. Breck wrote back that Clap was a liar, who dare not come to Springfield to defend his charges, and that the other accusers were merely Clap's tools. To Clap, however, he sent a conciliatory letter, acknowledging that he was too hasty in speech and asking for forgiveness; Clap merely passed the letter round among Breck's enemies, to prove to them that Breck himself admitted his guilt. In April, 1735, the Hampshire ministers met to consider the whole problem: Clap was asked to come in person, but, as Breck had prophesied, he stayed in Windham. He sent, however, a very characteristic letter: far be it from him, he said, to do the young man any harm; he was not a meddler; however, he added subtly, if he were asked to withdraw his accusations he must decline to do so.

Before the Hampshire ministers Breck explained the whole matter. Having a lively interest in the debatable questions of theology, he had thought it only reasonable in a young minister to discuss them with older people; and had propounded certain suggestions to Clap, not because he actually believed them, but in order to elicit the opinions of so learned a gentleman and by this means increase his own knowledge of divinity. Having read in a book that the tale of the woman taken in adultery was not a part of the canon of scripture, he had started an argument on the matter with Clap; Clap had responded smartly that there could be no doubt whatsoever, "for (says he) God is obliged in his Providence to keep the Scripture pure and incorrupt, except that he gives us sufficient Proof of the Corruption of it." This view of God's obligations did not appeal to Breck; he pointed out that one could not convince an infidel with such an argument; and anyway one could reply that God in His providence had given us sufficient reason to think that passage an interpolation and not of divine inspiration. To this Clap made no reply, either because he was horrified by so awful a heresy, or because there was no reply. As for the salvation of well-behaved heathen, Breck had never suggested that man could be saved by any other means than faith in Christ. "Far be it from me to imagine such a thing," he told the assembled ministers; but it had occurred to him as rather unfair that well-behaved heathen should go to hell as if they were no better than heathen who had lived vicious lives; and being much troubled in mind about the destiny of well-behaved heathen, he had suggested that perhaps, if they lived up to the best light and knowledge they had, God would take pity on them, and either inspire some good Christians to go and preach to them or else arrange that they should emigrate to a Christian country. This, he protested, was all that he had meant, and so he had told Mr. Clap again and again; but, in spite of his explanations, Clap had continued to tell people that Breck was a dreadful heretic who had preached that well-behaved heathen could enter heaven by other means than faith in Christ. Breck then defended his personal character: he had never been expelled from Harvard; on the contrary, as Clap could easily have found out for himself, he had graduated at the head of his class and been awarded a prize; it was true that early in his college career he had fallen into bad company, but, as he had told Mr. Clap with tears in his eyes, he had repented of his sins and would make no attempt to justify them.

After this defense a few of the Hampshire ministers were disposed to relent; but Edwards and the majority were still of the opinion that Breck was a public danger, and that there must be some good foundation for the accusations of a gentleman who professed himself so exceedingly anxious not to interfere as Mr. Clap. The majority of the church ignored the ministers, and renewed their invitations to Breck; and when Breck accepted, one of their leaders galloped off to Boston to collect a batch of more liberal clergymen for the ordination. A minority of the church sided with the Hampshire ministers, who encouraged them not to give way but to fetch up Clap and his allies from Connecticut; and Clap promised not only to come himself, but also to bring others who had heard Breck utter still more heresies.

To Edwards and the Hampshire ministers the appeal of Springfield to Boston was the most shocking part of the affair. They were full of prejudices against the metropolis two days' journey to the east; it was a vicious town, infected with heresies. In Hampshire, by contrast, lives were pure and beliefs were orthodox; and they claimed the right to veto the ordination of any minister within their boundaries; they did not want a neighbor who was stained with

Boston liberalism. By custom, but not by Massachusetts law, they possessed this right; many of them, moreover, belonged by birth to Connecticut, where such a right was legal as well as customary.

In October all the parties were gathered in Springfield. There were Breck, and the two groups of parishioners, who by this time were not on speaking terms with each other; there were four liberal Boston ministers; there were the ministers of the Hampshire association; there was Thomas Clap, with several boat-loads of witnesses and a bag stuffed with affidavits; and, to everybody's surprise, there were John Stoddard, Ebenezer Pomeroy, and Timothy Dwight, of Northampton, all parishioners of Edwards, and justices of the county court. Edwards himself was not present; his health had broken down after his exertions during the revival, and he had left New England on a holiday; he had gone, perhaps, to New York; but he afterwards wrote expressing full approval of what his allies had done. The Boston ministers put up at the public tavern, where the Hampshire ministers refused to call on them. All business was suspended; and, though Breck's partisans were determined to go through with the ordination, they gave up preparations for the usual feast.

The ordaining council met behind locked doors, and summoned the principals in the dispute. Breck was invited to explain his theological opinions, and responded by reading a confession of faith, original in language, but as orthodox in sentiment as Edwards himself could have demanded. Then the council called on Mr. Clap; he began a long speech, which Breck repeatedly interrupted; in the middle of it he paused to hold a private conversation with a messenger who had galloped up to the house. The messenger galloped off again; and in a few minutes the speech was again interrupted; a government officer strode into the room, with a sword dangling from his belt, and produced a warrant for Breck's arrest. The young theologian was led away to prison, and Clap's face was radiant with delight; the arrest had been timed to prevent Breck from replying to him. The baffled inhabitants of Springfield, seeing their minister marched through the streets, nearly rescued him by force, but thought better of it. The warrant had been issued on a petition from twelve men from Springfield, only two of whom were church members; they claimed that Breck had "vented many articles of Faith wholly subversive of the most Holy Faith of our Christian Religion, as well as being guilty of moral Immoralities," and was about to be illegally ordained, which was "an Invasion of our Natural Rights as men." Clap's original plan had been to arrest the four intruders from Boston; but two of the justices had qualms about laying hands on an ordained minister, so it was decided that Breck should be the victim instead. For Clap the arrest was a master-stroke: it would save the purity of the church, and at the same time prevent his own lies and prevarications from being exposed in the presence of the ordaining council.

Next day a young man mounted a white horse in the streets of Springfield, and read out to the assembled crowd of farmers, tradesmen, and yokels Breck's confession of faith. Breck's partisans cheered loudly when they found their champion triumphantly professing belief in predestination, original sin, and the damnation of the unconverted; the rest of the crowd were inclined to boo, because of some unorthodox terms in the phraseology.

Breck was carried off to Connecticut, as it was there that he had uttered his heresies; and his partisans marched out of Springfield beside him. The Connecticut judges discharged him. A few weeks later there was a long debate in the Massachusetts General Assembly, ending with a vote censuring the Hampshire justices for violating the liberties of the church. In January Breck was ordained, the Boston ministers riding for a second time across the hills to Springfield. Some of the minority, with true New England stubbornness, tried to renew the fight on behalf of their "Natural Rights as men" against Breck's "moral Immoralities"; but Clap had had enough; and the case was dropped. Breck was accepted by the Hampshire association, and became a most successful pastor.

The controversy produced three pamphlets, one in favor of Breck, and two against him. One of the latter was written by Edwards; thanks to his passion for orthodoxy, he was wholeheartedly on the side of his Hampshire colleagues. His subtlety of mind and clarity of style made him an incomparable pamphleteer and he excelled in making his opponents look ridiculous; he was so well able to make the worse appear the better cause that his defense of Clap was left unanswered.

Probably it never occurred to Edwards that a champion of orthodoxy, like Thomas Clap, might be a liar. That gentleman's motives remain obscure. Perhaps he was honestly deluded; he retained through life a capacity for believing ill of people whom he disliked. But after all the purity of the church is a noble cause, and orthodoxy covers a multitude of sins. Clap's ideas about honesty were always rather peculiar: he afterwards wrote a textbook on ethics, for the use of the divinity students at Yale; to say what was untrue was, he explained, in all cases wicked, but deliberately to omit part of the truth, in the full consciousness that another person would be deceived was under some circumstances quite justifiable; in other words a lie was not a lie if one could appease one's conscience by fulfilling certain technical requirements of the law of truth. But, by any system of morality, Clap's reiteration of his charges that Breck was a thief and a dangerous heretic, months after he had had full information to the contrary, is hard to explain; nor can Edwards be praised for his share in the controversy.

Time, however, was to bring its revenges. If Edwards behaved badly to Robert Breck, his misconduct was to bring upon his head, many years after, a heavy retribution.

The year 1735 was an eventful one in the history of the New England churches. While the Connecticut Valley was arguing about the details of orthodox theology, eastern Massachusetts was discussing the powers and privileges of clergymen, with an irreverence which many members of that order found very alarming. The Reverend Samuel Fiske, of the first church in Salem, had made himself very unpopular among his parishioners; he had refused to consult them about the business of the church; he had deleted from the church records votes contrary to his wishes; he had complained because his salary was being paid in depreciated paper-money instead of in specie; and when his people failed to live up to their vows in the matter of church attendance, he had pointed out to them that breaking one's oath was wicked. When his congregation called in a council of outsiders, Fiske replied that the government of the church under Jesus Christ, "is committed to me, not to yourselves, or any, or all others." These haughty words provoked rebellion. Next Sabbath, when Mr. Fiske strode into the meeting house to conduct the services, he found the pulpit already occupied by a clergyman imported from Boston; he mounted the steps, and tried to expel the intruder by violence; but the congregation pulled him down and expelled him from the meeting house. He and his adherents thereupon built a new meeting house for themselves seventy yards away; and the two parties were not on speaking terms for twenty-seven years. The sentiments of Fiske's clerical colleagues were made plain next month; the ministers' convention invited him to preach their annual sermon; for this they were reprimanded by the legislature, while the newspapers raved against such theocratic impudence.

The Fiske affair was not unparalleled, but the prominence of the person and the place made it much talked of. Such episodes were to occur with increasing frequency down to the Revolution. But expulsions of ministers were by no means uncommon: one may consider, for example, a quarrel at North Eastham nine years earlier. Mr. Oakes, the minister, had married a widow, who was alleged, rightly or wrongly, to be the mother of a bastard; his congregation thereupon stopped paying his salary of eighty pounds a year, and had preaching from young Harvard graduates, at a cost of only thirty pounds a year; a law-court declared that Mr. Oakes was guilty of no offense and that his salary was due. However, the parish pronounced him dismissed; and somebody locked the meeting house and kept the key. On the Sabbath Mr. Oakes and his adherents arrived several hours before the regular service time and occupied and barricaded the pulpit. The bulk of the congregation with their minister, Mr. Sumner, on hearing the news charged in quickly, and found Mr. Oakes in the middle of a prayer; this did not, however, restrain them; a police constable, having fought his way past Mrs. Oakes and her partisans, climbed up into the pulpit, and pulled down Mr. Oakes while he was praying. Mr. Sumner then began his prayer, which the Oakes party did their best to interrupt by throwing benches about and shouting abusive epithets. Next Sabbath Mr. Sumner captured the pulpit first; Mr. Oakes rushed in afterwards, and, in an effort to reach his rival, knocked down and stunned one of his parishioners who was guarding the pulpit steps. The records add that that gentleman, after recovering his senses, complained to Mr. Oakes that such behavior was unworthy of a good shepherd.

In the Connecticut Valley they probably thought that such episodes were peculiar to the East. They were to be disillusioned before long.

For Edwards the next half dozen years were quiet and prosperous. The improvement caused by the revival proved to be permanent; none of the converts relapsed, and their meetings for religious conversation continued; the young people were no longer lewd or sensual; they held no more frolicks or revels; they no longer sang bawdy songs or exchanged unclean conversation; and fornication was now "very rare." Edwards took the opportunity to drive in still more firmly their new distaste for carnal pleasure; he made a vigorous effort to stamp out bundling; and preached sermons in which he argued that if a habit ceased during a revival it proved that God disliked it; hence bundling, which had not been practiced during the periods of conversions, must needs be sinful.

The decay of religion was mainly seen in an "eagerness after the possessions of this life and undue heats of spirit among persons of different judgements in publick affairs." Aroused from their rural torpor, the people of Northampton directed their stimulated energies into political and commercial pursuits. Particulars, however, have not survived; to the historian the little town appears much the same after the revival as before. A townhouse was built, and the schoolhouse was moved; a new meeting house was built, to hold the huge congregations which now assembled every Sabbath, and there were the usual quarrels about its position beforehand and its seating afterward. Before it was ready for use there was an accident in its predecessor; Edwards was preaching from the text, "Behold ye despisers and wonder and perish," and had just laid down his doctrine, when with a noise like a clap of thunder the whole front gallery collapsed. One hundred and fifty or two hundred persons were in danger, falling with it or seated underneath it; the house was filled with shrieks and many people thought that their end was come. But when the wreckage was examined it was found that no lives were lost and there were no serious injuries; the glory was given to God, and the next Wednesday was set apart as a day of thanksgiving for so miraculous a preservation.

But of the spiritual raptures, the visions of the beauty of God and the lapping flames of Hell, with which the young minister had infected the people of the little town, history knows nothing.

# CHAPTER IX

## THE LIFE OF A NEW ENGLAND MINISTER

THE last years of the seventeen-thirties are uneventful. There is time to pause, and describe the daily life of the minister of Northampton.

His main occupation is study. At four in the morning he leaves his bed, and lights his single candle; thirteen hours a day he spends poring over the tiny lettering of his volumes of theology, until his eyes, like those of almost all his colleagues, grow astigmatic; he reads always with a pen in his hand, and writes illegible notes which accumulate year by year. His studies, however, are not wholly theological; he devours every book on which he can lay his hands; most of the classics of English literature appear in his reading lists, and a few French books in English translations; he subscribes to an English monthly magazine; and, soon after publication, reads the novels of Fielding and Richardson. His opinion of Fielding is not recorded; but Richardson, whose "Pamela" is advertised, to suit the taste of New England, as likely to "cultivate the Principles of Virtue and Religion in the Minds of the Youth of Both Sexes," and is read all over the country by colonels' daughters and ministers' daughters, wins his strong commendation; Sir Charles Grandison is, in his opinion, "wholly favorable to good morals and purity of character;" when he reads it, he regrets his own inattention to the graces of good writing.

After dinner, every midday, he rides out for three miles to a lonely grove, where he dismounts and meditates; or in winter he sometimes chops wood for half an hour. In the evening he enjoys an hour's relaxation, when he and his wife smoke their long clay pipes by the fireside and talk with their children. Only by the strictest regularity of life and the most careful attention to diet is the minister, with his sickly constitution, able to spend such long hours in study.

The details of household business he leaves to his wife. Their closest friend describes her as "a most judicious and faithful mistress of a family, habitually industrious, a sound economist, managing her household affairs with diligence and discretion. She is conscientiously careful, that nothing should be wasted or lost; and often, when she herself takes care to save any thing of trifling value, or directs her children or others to do so, or when she sees them waste any thing, she repeats the words of our Saviour—'That nothing be lost.'" The minister must sometimes attend to the business of the farm; he writes letters to a friend, arranging for the purchase of sheep, in order that his family may have wool. But his salary is the largest in New England, outside Boston, and is paid with quite unusual regularity; so in general he can leave his farm to the care of his wife and their hired man; and in course of time he becomes more and more aloof and absent-minded.

Nevertheless it is necessary always to exercise the strictest economy. Owing to the depreciation of the currency all New England is in distress; the lawcourts are crowded with debtors; and the ministers, with their fixed salaries which, even when paid, are usually quite inadequate, are everywhere complaining of their poverty to God, to their parishes, and to the General Assembly. They eat meat once a day; their breakfast and supper consist solely of bread and milk; their only wine is what is left over from communion services; and coffee, chocolate, rum, tobacco, and books are considered as luxuries.

Children come to the minister and his wife with Puritan regularity, one every two years; there are eleven in all; no less than six are born on the Sabbath, thus disproving the old superstition that children born on the Sabbath were conceived on the Sabbath, and, being the fruit of wickedness, should be denied baptism. Mrs. Edwards has the chief care of them: and her dreadful responsibility in bringing into the world yet another sinner worthy of damnation causes her to pray vehemently to God for the conversion of the future babe as soon as she is pregnant. She never speaks angrily to them, and never uses heavy blows; very rarely does she punish them at all. An eye-witness reports that they never quarrel with each other; and that "when their parents come into the room, they all rise instinctively from their seats, and never resume them until their parents are seated; and when either parent is speaking, no matter with whom they have been conversing, they are all immediately silent and attentive."

Mr. Edwards is bowed down by the fear that even one of them may go to hell, and cares infinitely more about their spiritual welfare than about the health of their bodies. Unconverted children, he believes, go to hell like unconverted adults; and it would be a terrible breach of duty not to describe to them the terrors of eternal punishment; how many souls, dying in childhood, he asks, must curse their parents for such false kindness? "As innocent as children seem to be to us," he declares, "yet, if they are out of Christ, they are not so in God's sight, but are young vipers and are infinitely more hateful than vipers; . . . they are naturally very senseless and stupid, being born as the wild ass's colt, and need much to awaken them. Why should we conceal the truth from them?" When his daughters are away from home, he writes them curious solemn letters. To Sarah he says: "You have very weak and infirm health, and I am afraid are always like to have; and it may be, are not to be long-lived; and while you do live, are not like to enjoy so much of the comforts of this life, as others do, by reason of your want of health; and therefore, if you have no better portion, will be miserable indeed." And to Mary, who is visiting friends in Portsmouth: "If you should be taken with any dangerous sickness, that should issue in death, you might probably be in your grave, before we could hear of your danger. But yet, my great concern is not for your health, or temporal welfare, but for the good of your soul." When young Timothy at New York is in danger of smallpox, he tells him; "If I hear that you have escaped—either that you have not been sick, or are restored—though I shall rejoice, and have great cause of thankfulness, yet I shall be concerned for you. If your escape should be followed with carelessness and security, and forgetting the remarkable warning you have had, and God's great mercy in your deliverance, it would in some respects be more awful than sore sickness." Jonathan, at the age of nine, he sends to live among the Indians, in order that he may learn their language, and be able to preach the gospel to them when he is a man.

Nevertheless his family are not miserable. A happy home is the truest proof of Christianity; and Mrs. Edwards and her children all adore him passionately; she can scarcely endure a reprimand from him; and except Pierpont, who is less than eight years old when Mr. Edwards dies, they are all devout Edwardeans, and continue so through life. For he can be indulgent to them; one day he spends four and sixpence on a child's plaything; and Mrs. Edwards buys, for her adornment, a gold locket and chain which costs eleven pounds. When their daughters grow to be sixteen and eighteen, and ministers and Northampton gentlemen come to court them, they are allowed every freedom to become well acquainted.

To his parishioners he is not so human; they love him less and fear him more; he is so absorbed in his studies that, except at times of awakening, they see too little of him. He preaches twice on the Sabbath and once during the week; he also preaches often at private meetings in particular neighborhoods; and he calls the children to his home and prays with them, and also catechises them every Sabbath. But he is too shy and aloof, and too absorbed in the things of eternity, to indulge with freedom in worldly conversation; he does not mix well; and any attempt to exchange gossip with his neighbors about the crops or the Indians, and twist it round to religion, results only in a lowering of his dignity. "I have a constitution, in many respects peculiarly unhappy," he says, "attended with flaccid solids, vapid, sizy, and scarce fluids, and a low tide of spirits; often occasioning a kind of childish weakness and contemptibleness of speech, presence, and demeanor, with a disagreeable dullness and stiffness, much unfitting me for conversation." So he never visits his people unless they send for him. They know him as a solitary horseman, riding out every afternoon for communion with God among the trees; and only Colonel Stoddard, perhaps, is intimate with him.

Some of the neighboring ministers, however, know him more closely, and consider him the greatest genius of the age; for he is a faithful and a stimulating friend, with a talent for making disciples. A burly loud-voiced aggressive divinity student, named Bellamy, comes in 1738 to study in his house; he remains for eighteen months before being ordained, and is utterly dominated by the more gentle personality of his teacher; they become most intimate friends, and meet often to discuss the problems of theology; Bellamy is so saturated with the ideas of Edwards that his writings would be indistinguishable from his master's but for his more prosaic style. Three years later a young man from Yale, named Hopkins, having heard Edwards preach, rides to Northampton and presents himself at the house, though he is an utter stranger; Edwards is away, but Mrs. Edwards makes him welcome and invites him to stay the winter. He is gloomy and dejected, and spends most of the time alone in his bedchamber. Mrs. Edwards after some days comes to his room and asks if she can help him. The young man replies that he fears he is damned. Mrs. Edwards replies that she has been praying for him, and promises him speedy comfort. He stays in the family until the following autumn, when he becomes a minister. Bellamy and Hopkins are united in their passionate devotion to Edwards and his theology; they are united too in their admiration for the beauty and charm of Mrs. Edwards; her tactful hospitality makes them immediately feel at home, whenever they visit her husband.

For twenty-three years this is the life of the minister of Northampton. For twenty-three years he sits in his study, elucidating the high problems of divinity. The sun rises over the barren table-land of central Massachusetts, and sets beyond the ranges of the Berkshires; the maples put out their leaves in April, and become yellow and scarlet in October; the thunderstorms break over Mount Holyoke, and the moonlight is reflected in the waters of the stately river Connecticut. The pile of notes grows higher, and the outlines of a complete theological system steadily take form and shape.

Behind him is always the framework of the seasons. In the spring there is sowing of corn and wheat, and the calves and lambs are born; in the summer there is hay-making, and the barns are repaired for harvest; in the autumn the crops are gathered in, the apples are garnered, and the beer and cider are brewed; then the sheep and oxen are slaughtered, and the river freezes over, and the snow prevents all but the most necessary communication with the world outside; and always there are horses to be fed, and cows to be milked, and butter and cheese to be made. Northampton is dominated by the slow rhythms of nature, and any caprice of the powers that govern it may result in famine.

Life, however, is not one round of duty in a single spot. Through New England there is much coming and going of ministers, who ride along the dirt-tracks from town to town. They ride to visit each other or to preach in each other's pulpits. They ride to association meetings, where they discuss obstinate heretics and the smallness of their salaries. Sometimes they ride to a council, where ministers and delegates from half a dozen churches meet to arbitrate a quarrel between another minister and his church; they hear how the minister has admitted members and appointed officers without securing the consent of his people, how it is shrewdly suspected that he drinks too much and is over-fond of his maid-servant; the minister replies that his efforts to discipline sinners have been ignored, that his people no longer come to meeting, that his salary has not been paid for several years. The council sits all day and through the night, and, if God favors them, have agreed before sunrise on a "result," which may, with God's help, reconcile the parties.

From Northampton Edwards rides almost every year down the valley to New Haven for Yale Commencement, or across the hills to the ministers' convention at Boston. Boston is the longer distance and he spends two nights on the journey at the houses of fellow-ministers. As he rides he meditates systematically upon some theological problem; and amid the hum of the grasshoppers and the rustle of apple orchards, he formulates a theory about the happiness of the angels, or the relationship of God the Father to the Holy Ghost; when he has finished, he fastens a piece of paper to some part of his clothing, to remind himself to write down his conclusion when he comes home. On the morning of the third day he is soon clattering over the cobblestones of Boston, on his way to the house of Benjamin Colman or of Thomas Prince, his two chief friends among the clergy of the town.

Boston is a very gay town. If Edwards were more observant and less absorbed in divinity, he would see young ladies in scarlet hoods and great hooped petticoats tripping along the streets to dances and singing-lessons; if he were not so obviously a minister somebody might put into his hands an advertisement for a dancing assembly. He passes a pillory, where a cheater is being pelted by the onlookers; or his way is blocked by a funeral procession of many carriages, all loaded with mourners, winding its way up to Cop's Hill burial ground. Sometimes there is a wild animal on show, a catamount or a leopard, a "tyger-lyon" or a two-headed foal; or the streets are filled with servants gaping at a distinguished visitor—Shick Sidi, the Syrian, for example, who has a swarthy complexion and wears the Turkish costume, and is said not to like Boston very well. On the Sabbath as he walks down with Dr. Prince to the Old South Meeting House, he may find the streets all lined with noisy crowds; they are waiting to see a murderer, under sentence of death, brought from the prison to the church. And when he comments on how the Bostonians pollute the Sabbath, Dr. Prince may reply that the crowd is nothing compared with that which awaited the pirates in 1726, when a group of men captured on the high seas by the vigilance of a private citizen, were all condemned to die; when they were brought through the streets to hear Dr. Benjamin Colman preach their last sermon, says Dr. Prince, some of them were penitent, but one hardened rascal wore a nosegay and gallantly ogled the ladies who craned their necks to see him. If Edwards is in Boston on Guy Fawkes day he sees troops of children marching round the town, demanding money from householders, and breaking the windows of those who refuse. Whenever there is a birthday or a marriage in the British royal family, there is a festival: all the church bells ring out peal after peal; the militia parades and is inspected by the Governor; and in the evening there is a banquet and a ball. Every day of the week but two there is a newspaper, relating the latest news from Europe, mixed with a tale of a negro slave who has hanged himself, or of two Connecticut farmers who have got drunk, fallen through the ice, and been drowned, and followed by an advertisement of a wet-nurse or a parcel of slaves to be sold.

But Boston is not congenial to ministers from the Connecticut Valley. Boston is half-way to London, and London, to judge from family traditions, from its heretical books, and from the tales of wicked noblemen and ladies of easy virtue which the Boston newspapers reprint with such willingness, is obviously a very wicked place. So Edwards cares only for talking with the ministers, and turning over the latest importations in the bookshops on Cornhill; and even the ministers' conventions are marred for him by the liberalism of so many of the Harvard graduates who attend them. He accepts these facts, as he accepts everything, as ordained in God's inscrutable providence. But he thanks God that Northampton is less obviously predestined for hell than Boston.

To Boston, on the other hand, with its dignified merchants, its smart shopkeepers and lawyers, he is a provincial, though less round-eyed and easily impressed than most. They despise the westerners; they are people without refinement, who scarcely know how to use forks and knives, who are startled and horrified by the organs in the Episcopalian churches. They have read in the "Courant" about the practice of bundling, which appeals to them as especially crude and ridiculous; modesty out west, they tell each other with decorous sniggers, is measured by bastards. In Boston, of course, there is a double standard of morals, and the favors of lower class women are not gratuitous.

The few who can appreciate Edwards become his friends. He makes acquaintances among some high political officers, and corresponds regularly with some of the clergy. His first publication is a sermon preached at the public lecture in Boston in 1731. Dr. Colman and his colleague write a preface, in which they explain that "it was with no small difficulty that the author's youth and modesty were prevailed on, to let him appear a preacher in our public lecture, and afterwards to give us a copy of his discourse." And they "heartily rejoice in the special favor of Providence, in bestowing such a rich gift on the happy church of Northampton."

His wife and children, also, visit his Boston friends; and Miss Esther Edwards becomes the close friend of Miss Sally Prince. But probably Edwards is glad when he turns his horse westward, and on the morning of the third day sees the ridge of Holyoke once more loom up to the left and the spire of his own meeting house visible among the trees in front of him.

While the years slip by, his devotion to his religion only grows more ardent. As he contemplates the infinite beauty of God and appreciates it more vividly, he becomes more conscious of his own feeble and fallible humanity. "Often since

I lived in this town," he relates, "I have had very affecting views of my sinfulness and vileness; very frequently to such a degree as to hold me in a kind of loud weeping, sometimes for a considerable time together; so that I have often been forced to shut myself up. . . . It has often appeared to me, that if God should mark iniquity against me I should appear the very worst of all mankind; of all that have been since the beginning of the world to this time; and that I should have by far the lowest place in hell. . . . My wickedness, as I am in myself, has long appeared to me perfectly ineffable, and swallowing up all thought and imagination; like an infinite deluge, or mountains over my head. I know not how to express better what my sins appear to me to be, than by heaping infinite upon infinite, and multiplying infinite by infinite. . . . And it appears to me, that were it not for free grace . . . I should appear sunk down in my sins below hell itself. . . . And yet it seems to me that my conviction of sin is exceedingly small and faint."

With a curious reversed pride, not uncommon in the annals of Christianity, he adds that "when I ask for humility I cannot bear the thought of being no more humble than other Christians. It seems to me, that though their degrees of humility may be suitable for them, yet it would be a vile self-exaltation in me, not to be the lowest in humility of all mankind."

He has times of especial fervor. Once, when walking among the trees, he has "a view that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between

God and man;" for an hour he is in a flood of tears, weeping aloud, because he longs to be "emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone." And on one Saturday night he "had such a sense, how sweet and blessed a thing it was to walk in the way of duty; to do that which was right and meet to be done, and agreeable to the holy mind of God; that it caused me to break forth into a kind of loud weeping, which held me some time, so that I was forced to shut myself up, and fasten the doors."

But, in spite of his own wickedness and the wickedness of his parish, he still finds in the natural world beyond his door-step a shadow of God's excellency. In gentle breezes and singing birds, in the lily and the fragrant rose, in the murmur of rivers and in the golden edges of an evening cloud, "in comets, in thunder, in the hovering thunder-clouds, in rugged rocks and the brows of mountains," "in that beauteous light with which the world is filled on a clear day," and in the beauty of the human body, he sees emanations of Christ's glory and goodness.

# CHAPTER X

## SECOND MOVEMENT OF GOD'S SPIRIT

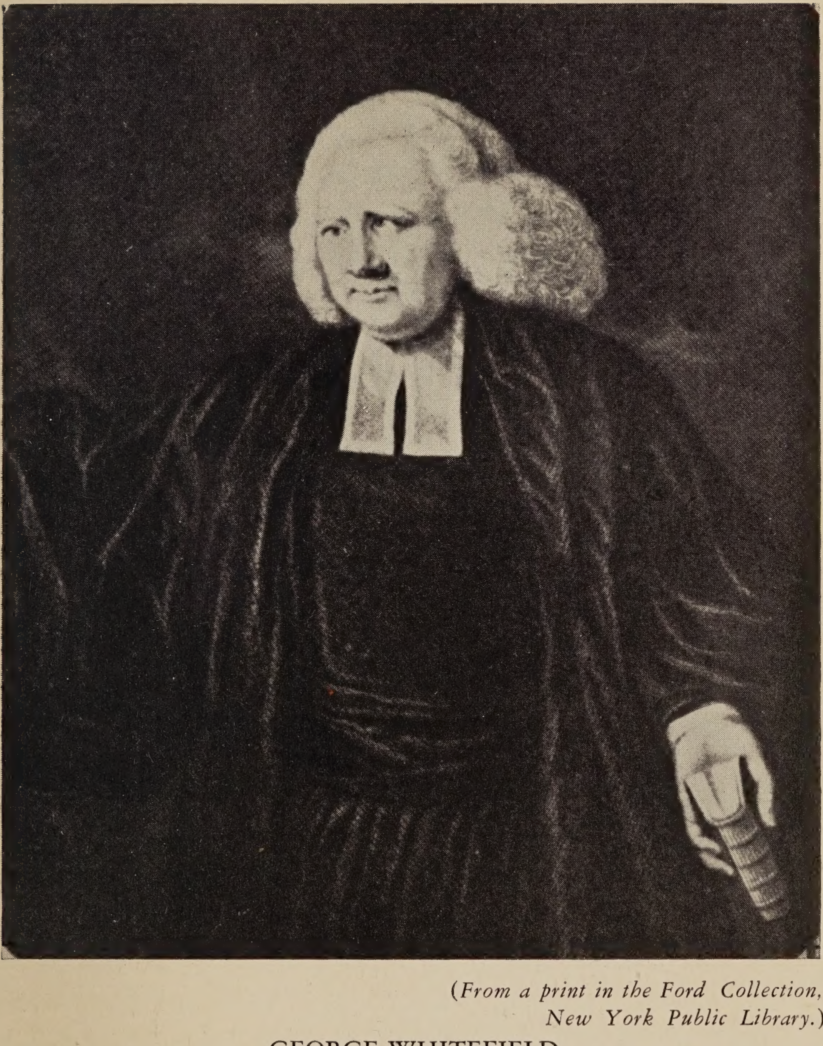
IN 1740 began in New England one of the most remarkable religious convulsions of modern times, the so-called "Great Awakening." Its immediate effects were insignificant; in spite of its sound and fury, there was little genuine religious feeling about it. But ultimately it proved of great importance; it compelled people to think out their religious problems from the foundation; the unreasoning conservatism of such ministers as Thomas Clap was swept away; henceforth a New Englander was either a genuine Calvinist, like Edwards, or a liberal, like some of the Bostonians. Moreover, it was the real beginning of "orgiastic" Christianity in America; it gave birth to the earliest of those sects which New England was to produce in such profusion in the following century.

It was started by the English itinerant preacher, George Whitefield.

Whitefield was born in 1714, the son of an innkeeper; he had an ordinary education, and, as he relates with the utmost frankness, he was addicted to all the vices which regularly attack the young; but some odd and inexplicable streak of nobility made him liable to revulsions and fits of repentance. He went up to Oxford as a poor servitor and began to lead a life of strict religious devotion; as formerly he had posed as a rake, so now he pretended to be more serious than he really was. Then he met the Wesleys; and for a year his endeavor was to do nothing which he did not do for the glory of God; he must altogether stifle his self-consciousness, and mortify his vain thoughts, which still possessed him even while he performed the most mortifying acts. So he chose the worst sorts of foods, he fasted often, he dressed in mean clothes, and he spent whole days and nights in lying prostrate on the ground, begging freedom from his pride. Then one day conversion came, and he knew that he was saved; henceforth, when he performed virtuous acts, he no longer posed to himself or rejoiced in his own righteousness.

He was ordained in the summer of 1736; and his first sermon made it obvious that he had very remarkable oratorical gifts; that sermon, according to enemies of "enthusiasm," drove fifteen persons mad. The "boy preacher" became immediately all the rage. When he entered Bristol, crowds and coaches met him a mile outside the city; he preached five times a week, and the church was so crowded that people hung upon the rails of the organ loft, and climbed upon the leads of the church; the air became so hot with their breath that it would condense on the pillars and fall like raindrops; when he announced that he must leave the city the whole congregation burst into tears; and he was forced to creep away in the small hours of the morning to escape from his admirers. In London the churches were so crowded that it seemed as though one could walk upon people's heads; he could no longer walk about the streets, but had to go by carriage to avoid embarrassing attentions. The Episcopal clergy, angered by his openly expressed contempt for them, and jealous because a congregation which had come to hear Whitefield would walk out if somebody else stood up to preach, expelled him from their churches; so he took to the open air, and crowds of fifty thousand persons, with eighty coaches and hundreds of horses, gathered to hear him on Kennington Common.

Whitefield was probably the most gifted orator of modern times. He had a voice which, in the open air, could carry his words without strain to enormous audiences; yet it had beauty as well as power; Mrs. Edwards described it as "deep-toned, yet clear and melodious," and added that it was "perfect music." If he had not been a preacher, he would have been a great actor; and part of his success was caused by his use of histrionic tricks, in an age when all other preachers expounded doctrine instead of trying to touch the emotions. He used much action, and would raise his hands high above his head; sometimes he stamped loudly and passionately, and burst into tears; when he spoke of how Peter went out and wept bitterly, he would himself shed tears and wipe them with a fold of his gown. He put so much energy into his preaching that his shirt was always drenched with perspiration. He would tell many anecdotes, and describe a scene with the utmost vividness. Preaching



(*From a print in the Ford Collection,
New York Public Library.*)

GEORGE WHITEFIELD

extempore, he was able to draw applications from events of the moment; and a thunderstorm, a passing cloud, or a burst of sunshine would be used to point his most impressive perorations. He planned his dramatic effects with the utmost care, and even visited popular murder trials in search of telling illustrations; at the end of a prayer there would be deep silence while five thousand persons sat breathless, or sobbing quietly; or in the middle of a sermon he would pause, and then cry out, to the full extent of his beautiful voice, "Works, works, a man get to heaven by works! I would as soon think of climbing to the moon on a rope of sand."

He was not a hellfire preacher; he accepted the doctrine of hell, because it was in the Bible; but it gave him no pleasure. The burden of his preaching was that "everything was sinful which was not done with a single eye to God's glory;" "Cards, Dancing, and such-like draw the Soul from God, and lull it asleep, as much as Drunkenness and Debauchery." Man was by nature "half a devil and half a beast," and he must be "born again."

He was a very simple soul, with no knowledge of theology; and his remarkable conversion caused him to become very intolerant of persons who doubted his divine mission; he believed that his whole life was under the direct guidance of God, who made known His will by causing texts to be impressed on his mind. He was no judge of persons, and was apt to be impressed by the craziest and most vulgar fanatics. But if he lacked the wisdom of the serpent, he had at least the innocence of the dove; he was always ready to reproach other people for their faults in the most tactless manner possible; but he cared nothing for his own reputation, and would acknowledge himself in the wrong whenever it was pointed out to him. And if he lacked Wesley's trained intellect and genius for organization, he was far less prone to make a fool of himself.

Fired by a dream of founding a Christian paradise in Georgia, he accepted a pastorate there. When he was about to sail, Wesley, who believed that the will of God could be discovered by lots, threw two slips of paper into a bowl and drew out the answer "let him return to London;" Whitefield, however, doubted whether this was really the will of God; after praying, he had impressed upon his mind a passage in the Book of Kings about a prophet who turned back and was slain by a lion; he therefore sailed at once. He found Georgia in the direst poverty, and decided that she would be most benefited by the extension of the rum trade, the building of an orphan house, and the importation of more slaves. Not that he was blind to the evils of either slavery or rum; he spoke out about both with the utmost frankness; but he did not object to them on principle.

In 1740 Dr. Colman invited him to New England. In a visit of only seventy-three days he rode eight hundred miles, preached one hundred and thirty sermons, and collected about seven hundred pounds for his orphan house. He caught cold, and vomited three times in Boston; and was stunned by a fall from his horse outside Springfield; but went on preaching which he considered "a constant Remedy against all Indispositions."

Governor Belcher of Massachusetts, who combined a talent for crooked politics with a sentimental piety, invited him to dinner, was twice reduced to tears, and three times kissed him farewell. Governor Law of Connecticut was also reduced to tears. The common people everywhere were similarly stirred.

In Boston there was an unfortunate accident. A large crowd filled the New South Meeting House, and hundreds more waited at the porch and on the pavement, hoping to push their way in; the congregation had been waiting anxiously for a long time, and the young people were chatting nervously to each other, when a bench creaked, and a young blade, putting his hand inside a girl's coat, made her scream; the crowd thought that the gallery was falling, and were panicstricken; some threw themselves out of the windows, and the rest poured out of the door, overwhelmed the people in the porch, and swept them out into the road and under the wheels of coaches. Two women and a boy were trampled to death, and two others died from injuries. That afternoon Whitefield preached on the Common, in an east wind and a drizzling rain. But the people continued to throng the meeting houses, so that sometimes Whitefield had to be lifted in through a window.

A narrative written by a Connecticut farmer named Nathan Cole shows how strangely Whitefield's fame had touched the people. Cole heard of his preaching in New

York and Boston, and longed to hear him; then one morning, about eight or nine o'clock, there came a messenger saying that he was to preach at ten that very day at Middletown, twelve miles away. Cole was at work in his field, but he dropped his tool, and ran home to call his wife; and together they mounted their horse, and set out to gallop to Middletown. When the horse began to lose breath, Cole dismounted and ran beside it; and when he was breathless he climbed on to the horse again; this he did several times, as though they were flying for their lives. When they were half a mile from the main road on higher ground, they saw on it what looked like a cloud or fog, rising above the trees, like mist from the river. And when they were nearer the road, they heard from it a noise like rumbling thunder; but when they had almost reached it they found that the cloud was a cloud of dust and the noise was the noise of horses' hoofs; and they could see men and horses slipping along in the cloud like shadows. They were passing in a steady stream with scarcely a space between one horse and the next, with their nostrils all of a lather and sweat dripping from their flanks. After a while Cole and his wife were able to force their way in, and for three miles they pressed forward into Middletown, without any man speaking a word; and their clothes and horses were so plastered with dust that they were all of the same color. When they came to Middletown there was a crowd of several thousands waiting, and the ministers were just coming towards the meeting house; and when they looked towards the Connecticut River, they saw the ferry-boats plying to and fro, and the oarsmen and the passengers and the horses all hurrying as if for dear life; and the banks across the river were still black with people. In all their twelve-mile ride they had not passed one soul still at work in the fields.

During his tour Whitefield visited Northampton, where he preached five times to large crowds. Tears streamed down Edwards's face during the sermon; while as for Whitefield, he was so attracted by the domestic happiness of Mr. and Mrs. Edwards that he resolved that "upon many Accounts, it is my Duty to marry." Soon afterwards he did marry, choosing his bride because her image was impressed upon his heart, in Whitefield's opinion by the Almighty. Afterwards, however, their son, of whose future greatness Whitefield had received many impressions, falsified them all by dying; so he changed his mind about this method of discovering the will of God.

Edwards rode with Whitefield as far as Windsor. Their conversation on the way became a theme of controversy; Whitefield apparently told Edwards that many of the clergy of New England—he had been there two months—had never been converted, and could not therefore be expected to convert their flocks; in other words they were leading them straight to hell. This opinion he soon afterwards published to the world in his "Journal." Whitefield also spoke of bringing over to the Middle Colonies a number of young Englishmen as missionaries.

Whitefield was accompanied by a certain Mr. Barber, minister of Oyster Ponds. Mr. Barber had been much excited when first he heard of Whitefield, being henceforth guided solely by Scripture texts impressed upon his mind. He spent a week telling his parishioners house by house that the end of the world was at hand; and then left Oyster Ponds to preach in Oldmans; remembering the scriptural injunction to take "neither purse nor scrip nor shoes," he was careful to wear boots. But at Oldmans texts no longer entered his mind, so he had to remain idle for months; then he was guided by the Spirit to Newport, where he found Whitefield, a meeting which both of them considered miraculous. When Edwards met Barber he remonstrated with him for thus obeying impressions; Whitefield said nothing but was not pleased.

The spiritual effects of Whitefield's preaching were always shallow; he was more of an entertainer than a real awakener. The revival came partly because after he had gone those New England ministers who took their duties seriously were so heartened by his success that they rammed home the gospel of hellfire and conversion with a completely new ardor, and partly because Whitefield sent up to Boston his friend Gilbert Tennent.

There was a Celtic mysticism about this strange Scotch-Irish evangelist; his sermons are still readable because of his passionate love for Christ and his passionate hatred of human nature; man at his best, to Gilbert Tennent, was "a filthy Leper, the basest Creature in all the Creation of God," and he deserved "the Damnation of Hell for the Corruptions of his best Prayers, Tears, and other Acts of Obedience." Hellfire and salvation by faith were the only themes of his preaching; and in spite of his clumsy gestures, his harsh and bellowing voice, and his savage appearance, he was a most successful revivalist. All through the winter of 1740-1 he labored in New England, telling the Bostonians that they were going to hell, and riding out with large troops of disciples to give the same message in the villages.

That winter was the longest New England could remember. In January they could pitch a tent on the Charles River for the entertainment of travelers, and there was ice for twenty miles along the South Shore; in March people could ride out every day from Stratford on to Long Island, and one man drove a horse and carriage along the Sound from New York to Barnstable; the sheep and cattle died everywhere by hundreds; and thick drifts of snow lay on the beaches at Ipswich and Provincetown all through the following summer. The roads were all but impassable, and Boston was threatened with famine.

When spring came the revival blazed up all over New England. In Boston Tennent's preaching ate away the will to resist and thousands of souls became convinced of sin. Scattered villages felt the power of God almost independently of outside influence; vague and magnified reports of Whitefield's preaching set them brooding amid the winter isolation of the apparent approach of Christ's kingdom, and made them as tinder which earnest ministers speedily set ablaze. The affection spread from town to town, ministers telling their own flocks of God's work elsewhere, and revivalists and converts bringing first hand reports of it. Through the summer of 1741 the fever grew hotter and hotter; in the fall it reached its maximum; but in the spring of 1742 it was still spreading to fresh parishes.

Terror of hell was the first manifestation of the revival, and in more primitive districts it showed itself in shrieks and screams; meeting houses would be filled with people all crying aloud at once. Sometimes they thought that the last judgment was at hand; at Taunton they saw through the windows eleven blazing stars in the sky, and at Portsmouth the chimney of a neighboring house caught fire; and the people at once believed that the moment of Christ's return in vengeance had actually come. Under the strain young women fainted or fell into hysterics, and strong men dropped as though shot through the heart. Terror, also, often caused unpleasant physical effects.

In terror of hell they ceased from frolicks and lascivious practices; they assembled all day and all night in their meeting houses, beseeching God for His converting grace; they could not hear enough sermons or sing enough psalms; and on training days they held extra prayer meetings instead of hurrying to the taverns. The land was filled with the wailing of sinners; and, as one minister reported, people "dared not close their Eyes to sleep lest they should awake in Hell."

After terror came conversion, a sudden light darted in upon the soul, which caused its recipients to cry out with joy and to fling their arms round their friends and kiss them. After this they were in an ecstasy for weeks together; they came to the meeting houses to sing praises to their newly found Redeemer, and to watch the birth pangs of their comrades; they marched through the streets in companies singing Dr. Watts's hymns; they sang hymns as they crossed the rivers on ferry-boats. Drunkenness, fornication, lewd songs and parties were altogether forgotten; dishonest persons made restitution, and quarrelsome persons forgave their enemies; and the little children no longer played in the streets.

Young people, Indians, and negroes were the most susceptible; it was obvious that God was calling not the righteous but publicans and sinners. Children of six and seven were under concern, and dropped down swooning in the streets; in some places the Spirit of God descended upon them so powerfully that the schools had to be closed; and in their terror of hell they wholly forgot their fear of the dark, and would walk for miles through the woods at night to attend religious meetings. Yale was turned upside down; psalm-singing was a popular pastime; students anxiously listened to the prayers and sermons of the rector, in order to discover whether or not he was converted, and freshmen tried to convert their landlords. In Rhode Island a tribe of pagan Indians were attacked by a religious frenzy which lasted thirty-six hours, and many were converted.

At least half the parishes in New England were affected, and the more primitive and the more godless a town was, the more susceptible it was; an earnest Calvinist minister could always awaken his congregation, but many congregations were infected whose ministers were neither earnest nor Calvinist; the hysteria spread like a pestilence. From twelve to fifteen thousand persons were converted, and at least one-tenth of the whole population were under the most serious concern.

Edwards exulted in this unprecedented manifestation of God's glory; his mind was on fire with a strange dream. According to prophecy the end of the world was at hand, and this amazing excitement could only be the prelude of it. Christ was to be born a second time. What land should have the honor of His birth? Surely, since in the Old World He had been born by the Virgin Mary, it was America that should see His return in glory. America, the New World, where, as the founders of New England had declared, the Lord was to build a new heaven and a new earth. Gone were the doubts of the second and third generations, gone was their pining for the flesh-pots of Europe, gone the sad conviction of the Mathers that in the Millennium America would be the headquarters of the devil. Edwards, expressing himself through the symbolisms of the Christian myth, was a patriotic American; Christ, he believed, was to build the New Jerusalem in New England. Years afterwards he indignantly repudiated the suggestion that he had said "that the Millennium was already begun, and that it began at Northampton;" but his published words were not very far short of this.

In his own congregation Whitefield's preaching had been followed by a revival, first among those already saved, then among the children who had been too young to be converted in 1735. At one meeting one or two converts were so deeply affected by their zeal for Christ, that they could not restrain themselves from bodily manifestations; and the people around them caught the infection from them "so that the whole room was full of nothing but outcries, faintings, and the like." Similar meetings followed. Then Edwards called together the young people of under sixteen years of age, and spoke to them of their destiny; "the room was filled with cries, and when they were dismissed, they almost all of them went home crying aloud through the streets." Another time he called together the people of from sixteen to twenty-six, which "proved to be a most happy meeting;" "many fainted." The revival reached its height during the summer of 1741, when "it was a very frequent thing, to see an house full of outcries, faintings, convulsions, and suchlike;" and people were often so overcome that they could not go home at night. The fervor began to decline during the autumn.

Edwards also preached often in other parishes, sometimes going long journeys and staying away for months at a time, while he assisted other ministers in carrying the flame to unawakened villages and to the churches of slothful pastors. He was universally respected, because of his success in 1735; and in some places, as at Enfield, his preaching had an instantaneous effect. But, as he freely and ungrudgingly acknowledged, he was not one of the most successful revivalists; his sober methods were not in favor; more and more the people demanded vehemence and rhetoric and the sensational. Whitefield and Tennent had introduced a new style of preaching, and eager pupils exaggerated all their innovations. Through the autumn and winter of 1741 the mobs of awakened New Englanders were growing more and more impatient with the expository sermons of the clergy, and more and more eager to be stirred, to be thrilled, to be excited to frenzy by the extempore oratory of the evangelists.

# CHAPTER XI

## SATAN BEGINS TO RAGE

THE most popular exponent of the new methods was the Reverend James Davenport, descendant of the founder of New Haven and the minister of Southold, on Long Island; he was a short coarse-featured person with bushy eyebrows, who, as his friends triumphantly reported, could scarcely speak without smiling. He appears to have been already slightly insane before the revival started.

When he first heard of Whitefield he became, like his friend Barber, very excited. He preached a sermon which lasted for twenty-four hours, after which he was confined for several days to his chamber; he then fasted and prayed with a dumb lunatic, and declared that on a certain day she would be cured; when the day came she died instead, which Davenport claimed as an answer to his prayer. Whitefield met him soon afterward, and was much impressed by his fervor; he noted in his diary that Davenport had "been favored with large communications from the Blessed Jesus, and is looked upon as an Enthusiast and a Madman by many of his Reverend Pharasaical Brethren."

Davenport received with delight Whitefield's published statement that most of the New England clergy, being unconverted, were leading their flocks to hell. In the summer of 1741 he set out to rescue them, and landed at Stonington, where he converted one hundred in eight days and did a prodigious work among the negroes; thence he went from town to town urging people to leave their ministers; a few minutes' conversation with a minister would usually convince him that he was unconverted, and he would then leave the house, mount his horse, ride with his followers singing hymns through the town, and preach to the people who were being led to hell. He intoned his sermons in a sing-song voice, which would carry popular emotion to the pitch of frenzy; he would declaim in solemn tones the words "Damned, damned, damned," and point to persons in the congregation, saying that he could see them at that moment dropping into hell; and he would leap up and down and clap his hands and remove his upper garments in order to be more active.

In the spring of 1742 Davenport was arrested and brought before the General Assembly of Connecticut; after the first day of his trial he preached to the mob in the center of Hartford, and nearly provoked a rescue by violence, but the sheriff took him into custody for the night; next day he was pronounced a lunatic and despatched back to his own parish. Southold, however, he considered unworthy of his attentions; he took ship for Boston, and began preaching on the Common, declaring that the sermons of the established clergy were as poisonous as ratsbane; but Boston proved too sophisticated, and his audiences ridiculed him;

finally, he was once more arrested, once more pronounced insane, and once more sent home. In Connecticut, however, he still had thousands of followers; he was heard of soon afterwards, at New London, where he made a bonfire on the quay of luxurious clothes and of theological treatises which had met with his disapproval; his followers sang hymns and danced round the flames, declaring that as the books were being burnt on earth, so their authors were being burnt in hell.

Davenport had many disciples among the common people, and dozens of imitators. All over New England in 1742 and 1743 swarms of lay-exhorters—tradesmen, artisans, negroes, women, and boys—began to denounce the regular clergy as unconverted and to urge people to leave them. There were schisms almost everywhere: those who had caught revivalism mildly wished to forget about it and resume their normal lives; the more emotional wanted to make their lives one long delirium of psalm-singing, praying, exhorting, and seeing visions. The churches were emptying: in some places because the minister was too fervent, in others because he was not fervent enough. The lay exhorters exaggerated all the absurdities of Calvinism; nothing mattered, they said, except conversion; every action of an unconverted man was sin—a gift of charity as much as murder or adultery; learning was useless to the sinner and unnecessary to the converted; and a minister who preached from notes instead of from the inspiration of the moment was an instrument of Satan. In some places people began to fall into trances: in New Haven two women dropped down senseless in a street and remained in this condition for a week; when they recovered they announced that they had been visiting the next world and had seen the Seats of Blessed, and their own seats empty; at Topsfield a negro had a similar experience, visiting hell as well as heaven. Some of the exhorters were genuine Christians who were shocked by the torpor of the established clergy, but others were maniacs and impostors: one claimed to be directly inspired by God the Father in all his actions, another called himself "an Emblem and Type of the Son of God," a third informed his disciples that if they did not pay him money they would burn in hell.

A few of the clergy were as mad as Davenport: a long-haired Connecticut minister named Crosswell, who had an artistic temperament which prevented him from keeping his appointments, became notorious as his defender; Davenport's mind, he said, was so perpetually in heaven that he would be rather hurt than helped by the preparations which lesser ministers needed for their sermons. Crosswell began to prophesy a bloody persecution of the true church in New England, and looked forward exultantly to his own martyrdom; his Christianity was of the sentimental brand which became so common a century later, but was at this time almost unknown; he unctuously thanked God for allowing him to be persecuted whenever anybody spoke ill of him.

The more moderate revivalists tried to hold the movement within the bounds of reason, and among them Edwards began to stand out as a leader. He was still preaching all over western Massachusetts and Connecticut. When the news came of Davenport's antics at New London he rode down to Lebanon in a violent storm, although he already had a chill, and there consulted with three fellow-ministers; together they proceeded to New London, to undo Davenport's work; but they were not able to persuade his followers—the "New Lights"—to return to the established church. Wheelock and another clergyman took Davenport in hand, and persuaded him that he had been under the influence of an evil spirit; in a letter to Barber, now spiritual director in Whitefield's Orphan House in Georgia, he told how he had fallen from grace; his letter shows that he was still quite as mad as before, for he explains how, immediately after his repentance, he was comforted by the direct intervention of the Almighty; and when other Christians expressed doubts as to whether the Almighty had really intervened, he was enabled to pity them for their stupidity. Barber read the letter to the orphans under his charge, along with a message that if they did not come to Christ without delay they must be burnt in hell for ever; some of them cried out, and many were converted. Six of the orphans then wrote letters to Davenport to express their gratitude; "I think I could hear it read a Thousand Times over, it is so sweet," said one, of his letter; "How sweet them words tasted," added another. These documents were afterwards published for the edification of the faithful; and Davenport resumed his life as a parish minister, with the approval of Edwards who occasionally corresponded with him.

Meanwhile the evils of the revival had reached Northampton. While Edwards was away in the winter of 1742 his pulpit was occupied by a young man just out of Yale, named Buell; and Buell's fervent preaching produced effects much more remarkable than the more sober disquisitions of Edwards; he spent his whole time, weekdays and Sabbath, in preaching; he provoked loud outcries in the meeting house from a large part of the congregation; and some persons fell into trances which lasted twenty-four hours, during which time they imagined themselves to be in heaven. When Edwards returned, he did not quite know what to make of it; "almost the whole town seemed to be in great and continual commotion, day and night," he said: but the work was almost entirely among people already converted. After a while it became plain that Satan was at work, and "a great deal of caution and pains were found necessary, to prevent the people, many of them, from running wild;" hearing of strange occurrences in other churches, they wished to imitate them, imagining that visions and physical excitements denoted a higher religion than sober and devout living. On the other hand, the revival abated party spirit; and the town came to an agreement on the question of the common lands, which had caused such heated debates; though, as appeared afterwards, the agreement was only temporary.

Edwards, however, did not falter in his conviction that the revival was the work of God; and since there was a growing conviction in New England that the devil had had more to do with it than the Holy Ghost, his chief task was not so much to control its victims as to defend it against its enemies.

First of all there were the deists, polite citizens of Boston who thought all religion a form of lunacy and were inclined to applaud the revival for making it obvious. They had scoffed at Whitefield; and Thomas Fleet had published a scurrilous pamphlet in which he was shown to be, at one and the same time, an Arminian, an Antinomian, a papist, and a hired agent of the Spanish crown. In 1741 public opinion had been strongly in favor of the revival, and the deists had confined themselves to exchanging private gibes with their friends. Then Davenport gave them their opportunity: religion was shown in its true colors; it was an infectious madness which would sweep away all civilization and order. For years the newspapers never tired of printing humorous descriptions of revival meetings, and Whitefield and his orphan house were a source of countless witticisms, frequently obscene as well as irreverent. The movement was represented as an artful scheme on the part of the clergy for recovering their lost influence. Among the merchants the cry against superstition was exceeded by another even more potent; that converts spent their time at religious meetings instead of at their duties, that the revival was bad for business.

In eastern Massachusetts the revival was attacked by the liberals among the clergy. Their leader was Charles Chauncy, a small vigorous cross-tempered rationalist, whose hatred of emotion extended to a contempt even for poetry. The revival had shocked them profoundly; to sing hymns in streets and ferry-boats, to be always telling other people about one's private emotions, to see visions and fall in swoons, to preach in the open air—such behavior violated all the canons of eighteenth century decorum. And they appealed to the prejudices of their weaker breathren by arguing that God could not have inspired a movement whose devotees sang hymns written by a man, even a man as pious as Dr. Watts; the Holy Ghost Himself, in the Book of Psalms, had given mankind all the hymns they needed; the revivalists were almost certainly papists in disguise, for only a papist could so dishonor the Bible. And by continual reiteration of such suggestions, buttressed by the charge that the orphan house was all a hoax and Whitefield an embezzler, the enemies of the revival very soon produced a panic.

In Connecticut it was the conservatives who hated it. Thomas Clap of the Breck case, for example, who in 1739 had been appointed rector of Yale, was quite convinced that it was the devil's handiwork; for a layman or a woman to preach was against nature, and a person who sang hymns on a ferry-boat was obviously demented; if the revival were tolerated it would destroy civilization, and the end would be either popery or atheism. A New Haven lady told him that a freshman had told her that one of his students, David

Brainerd, had actually declared that Tutor Whittelsey had no more of God's grace than a chair; such a spirit of rebellion justified all his suspicions; and Brainerd was promptly expelled. Two other students, John and Ebenezer Cleaveland, went to a meeting of revivalists who had seceded from the established church; the visit had been during their vacation, and in company of their parents, but that did not deter Rector Clap and they were summoned before him. They protested that they knew of no college law against going to revival meetings; the rector replied that the laws of God and the laws of the college were one; but they knew of no law of God which they had violated; ah, but the rector of Yale disapproved of revival meetings; for, to Thomas Clap, his own will and the will of the Almighty were identical, or so it appears from a narrative of the episode written by John Cleaveland. The boys refused to confess that they had broken the laws of God, Connecticut, and Yale; and they too were expelled.

Not long afterwards Edwards was riding to Boston for a ministers' convention, with his daughter on the pillion behind him; at Brookfield he fell in with Rector Clap and family, similarly bound; and Edwards, with surprising guilelessness, related the conversation which he had had with Whitefield. In Rector Clap's mind the details became inextricably confused; whether from design or from mere stupidity, he fitted them together in an entirely erroneous pattern; next year he announced that Whitefield had told Edwards that he intended to expel the New England clergy from their parishes and replace them by Methodists from Great Britain. Edwards, in a private letter to Clap, promptly denied it; Clap repeated his statement and added that Edwards in a private letter, had confirmed it. Edwards's reply was to publish the correspondence.

This ought to have been the end of Thomas Clap; but such a large proportion of the New Englanders were by this time prepared to believe any evil of a revivalist that he probably lost nothing by his chicanery. He continued to be rector of Yale for twenty years, and his unvarying conviction that his own way was the only right way involved him in an endless series of quarrels with the students, the tutors, the townspeople, the clergy, and the Connecticut Assembly. The students finally induced him to resign by petitioning for his removal on the ground that he was in his dotage; and he died of disappointment a few months later.

In Connecticut especially there were many of Clap's opinion. Laws were passed against revivalist preaching. Three of Edwards's closest friends were deprived of their legal salaries, and several exhorters were put in jail. The converts who had separated from the established church were compelled to pay taxes to support the ministers from whom they had seceded; when they refused to support such tools of Satan, they were imprisoned; and for thirty years there was religious persecution.

Under such conditions Edwards set himself to stem the flood of disapproval: in the autumn of 1741 he preached and published a sermon on the "Distinguishing Marks of a

Work of the Spirit of God;" and next year he published his "Thoughts on the Revival." In these works he condemned impressions on the mind and disorderliness and self-righteousness and itinerant lay-exhorters; but religion, he argued, was based on the affections, and excessive joys and terrors were not necessarily evil; enemies of the revival were judging it by their own preconceived notions of propriety; no convert was sinless—only such "a pretender to spirituality" as John Wesley maintained such an absurdity—and if somebody mistook God's will, "a high degree of love for God may accidentally move a person to that which is very wrong."

Edwards's ignorance of the real doctrines of the Wesleys was common in New England. The misapprehension must have increased a year or two later, when there was an impostor going about Massachusetts claiming to be Charles Wesley; "if he be the man," remarks one clerical diarist, after giving him a night's entertainment, "I fear that rum-drinking will be his ruin."

"Thoughts on the Revival" was a sober well-argued and good-tempered pamphlet, and ought to have convinced the extremists on both sides; but it was snowed under by the attacks on the revival which poured out from the Boston printing presses in overwhelming numbers.

Edwards was the less inclined to condemn emotional Christianity because his wife was a conspicuous example of it. During one of his absences from Northampton she enjoyed a series of spiritual raptures, of which she wrote out an account. What she pined after was complete surrender to the will of God, whatever that will might be; she perceived that she was unwilling to accept God's will if it meant that her husband should reprimand her, that the people of Northampton should think ill of her, or that some other minister should convert more people than her husband; the last of these seemed likely to be realized when Buell came to Northampton; and Mrs. Edwards found it very difficult to reconcile herself to it. However, after a while she felt herself resigned to anything; she would imagine all the horrible things that could possibly happen, from losing her husband's affection to a thousand years in hell, and would tell herself that she was prepared for anything; for several days she was in a continued ecstasy, falling into swoons and leaping up suddenly from her chair; and when she was in bed at night she felt that God was very near to her, "as it were close by," and knew that He belonged to her and that there was immediate and free communication between them.

# CHAPTER XII

## RELIGIOUS LUNACY

BY 1744 the tide of frenzy was rapidly receding, leaving behind it what seemed to many people the wreckage of the Congregational establishment. The Episcopalian churches were full; in seven years, according to Edwards, they trebled their numbers, and men were prophesying that before long they would be predominant. The liberals who had opposed the revival were considered the saviors of their country; and round Boston ministers were beginning to preach new and abominable heresies; it was the dawn of Unitarianism. Half the Congregational churches in New England were rent by factions; there were scores of schisms, and a number of ministers in every part of the country were expelled from their pulpits. The improvement in morals proved to be short-lived; and the decrease in fornication hardly compensated for a new spirit of irreverence and worldliness.

Whitefield returned in 1744; but a majority of the clergy refused to admit him to their pulpits, and the printing-presses groaned with scurrilous attacks on his personal character; respectable clergymen accused him of every conceivable crime from popery to theft. He had not altered; he landed in New Hampshire and was put to bed with a nervous colic; for four days his life was despaired of; a physician hurried up from Boston, and found him in the pulpit. A week later he preached in the rain, caught cold, and returned to bed; next day he preached for an hour, reduced his congregation to tears, and was put back to bed; and for several hours a crowd waited round him, expecting his death. Soon afterwards he came south to Boston in a coach and four, and preached there through the winter; vast crowds came to hear him at six in the morning, so that it was said that "between tarwater and early rising the physicians will have no business." But in Boston he was welcomed as an oratorical entertainment, not as a prophet of the Almighty; there were no conversions or outcries under his preaching now.

Meanwhile the converts who had left the established church, the "separatists," continued to enjoy revivalism. They alone still declared that a sudden conversion was needed to save man from hell; and they added that every body who stayed in the established church would certainly be damned. For the next dozen years there was a continual movement of exhorters through the villages of New England, denouncing the regular clergy as hirelings who turned the Gospel into money and led their flocks to hell. Separatism spread into over a hundred parishes, and won thousands of adherents. They met in remote farmhouses, in apple orchards, in barns and cottages, a persecuted remnant, who believed themselves to be God's peculiar servants; at their meetings there was no regular preacher or order of service, but each person spoke as the Spirit moved him, negroes as well as English, women and children as well as men; sometimes they were dead, and nobody at all exhorted or related experiences; at others the Spirit descended upon them like a rushing wind, and for twenty-four hours at a time they would be in a frenzy of devotion, one brother bellowing at the top of his voice, others weeping or singing hymns or falling in swoons. All over eastern Connecticut and central Massachusetts and along the beaches of Cape Cod their meetings were being held through the forties and fifties; and persecution merely quickened the flame. The leaders were attacked by mobs, but they did not falter; they were condemned to prison, but they exhorted to great crowds of disciples through the bars, and had to be released. Their disciples refused to pay church taxes, and oxen and horses and plough-teams were taken from them; companies of men and women were dragged for many miles along muddy roads to prison, and left there without food or fire or beds. But the flame only grew brighter.

Many of them were the craziest of fanatics. They believed that true converts could always know each other, not by rational judgment but by a strange and unaccountable love which the Holy Ghost inspired in them for each other. They returned to the old heresy of Calvin that assurance was the only proof of conversion, good conduct being irrelevant. Some of them had special powers of prayer and were summoned when another of the brethren was sick or needed rain for his crops. Their mouths were filled with the language of scripture: idylls which a Hebrew poet had sung to his mistress in the vineyards of Palestine they applied to their own love for Christ; denunciations with which some sun-baked prophet from the desert had cursed the empurpled kings of Samaria they flung at the clergy of the established church. For they had utter confidence that they alone, among all mankind, were to be saved from hell, and that quite soon, when the trumpets of the judgment sounded, they would see all their enemies tormented in perpetual flames.

At Newburyport some of them claimed to be already immortal, and beyond the possibility of sinning. At Easton they held their meetings beside a roaring fire and commenced them by drinking cider, and several brethren exchanged wives with each other. At Windham one separatist claimed to be a reincarnation of Jesus Christ; and another, having had it impressed on his heart that he would marry a certain woman, though he already had a wife and children, arranged that his existing wife should be murdered. To Grafton came a pipemaker from Charlestown, Shadrach Ireland, with a woman who was not his wife; he also declared himself a reincarnation of Jesus Christ, and for twenty years he lay hid in a great white house in the woods five miles beyond Harvard Village, and was spoken of by his followers as "the man;" he declared that within a few days of his death he would rise again; when he did die his disciples refused to inter his body until it had begun to stink. And though the separatist brethren disciplined each other, and forbade all foolish jesting, especially on the Lord's Day, bundling and fornication were as common as in the established church.

Confident in God's protection, they threatened their persecutors with vengeance. The "great Jah and terrible God-man will shortly come," they informed the tax-collectors and police officers of Connecticut, and "his burning Feet will stamp down all oppressive Laws (and all such as persist in upholding the same)." The persecutors of Christ's dear Bride would shortly "have their turn to be cast alive into the Wine-press of God's dreadful Wrath, to be trodden without the City, and Blood come out of the Winepress, even to the Horse's Bridle, by the Space of a Thousand and Six Hundred Furlongs." In the Book of Revelation they discovered a prophecy of the Great Awakening and their own persecution; the two witnesses who were slain were the revivalist ministers who, like Edwards, had apostatized; the first beast was Rome, but the second beast was the Congregational establishment, and the mark of the beast was human learning and authority. When they planned an appeal to the British Crown, they worked out another prefiguring of their persecution in the Book of Esther; Mordecai symbolized themselves, Haman their persecutors, and Ahasuerus the king of England; God, they asserted, would shortly place "a Crown of Glory . . . upon the Royal Head of our present King George."

They were, in fact, the earliest of the sects; they were the first blossom of that amazing tree which was to bear the Shakers and the Mormons, the Holy Rollers and the Millerites, the Perfectionists and the followers of pastor Russell.

More than a quarter of the ministers in New England had separatists in their parishes—farmers and artisans who had stopped going to the regular meetings because, they said, "the Lord had called them out" and they had had texts impressed on their minds; and many of them had received letters from separatist exhorters, who informed them, with great explicitness and fertility of detail, that they were destined to spend eternity in hell. They had, therefore, acquired a strong fear of revivalism, a fear which was to endure until after the Revolution.

But Edwards remained convinced that the Awakening had been the Lord's doing; it was the weakness and wickedness of man that had caused it to end in disaster; and if man would only repent God would once again pour out his spirit upon New England. He felt that the movement of 1740 was only a prelude to something far greater; he still hoped that the Millennium was at hand. Therefore he set himself to point out in what way the Lord's gift had been misused. The majority of the conversions had not, he freely confessed, been true conversions; and his duty now was to show how a false conversion could be distinguished from the genuine experience.

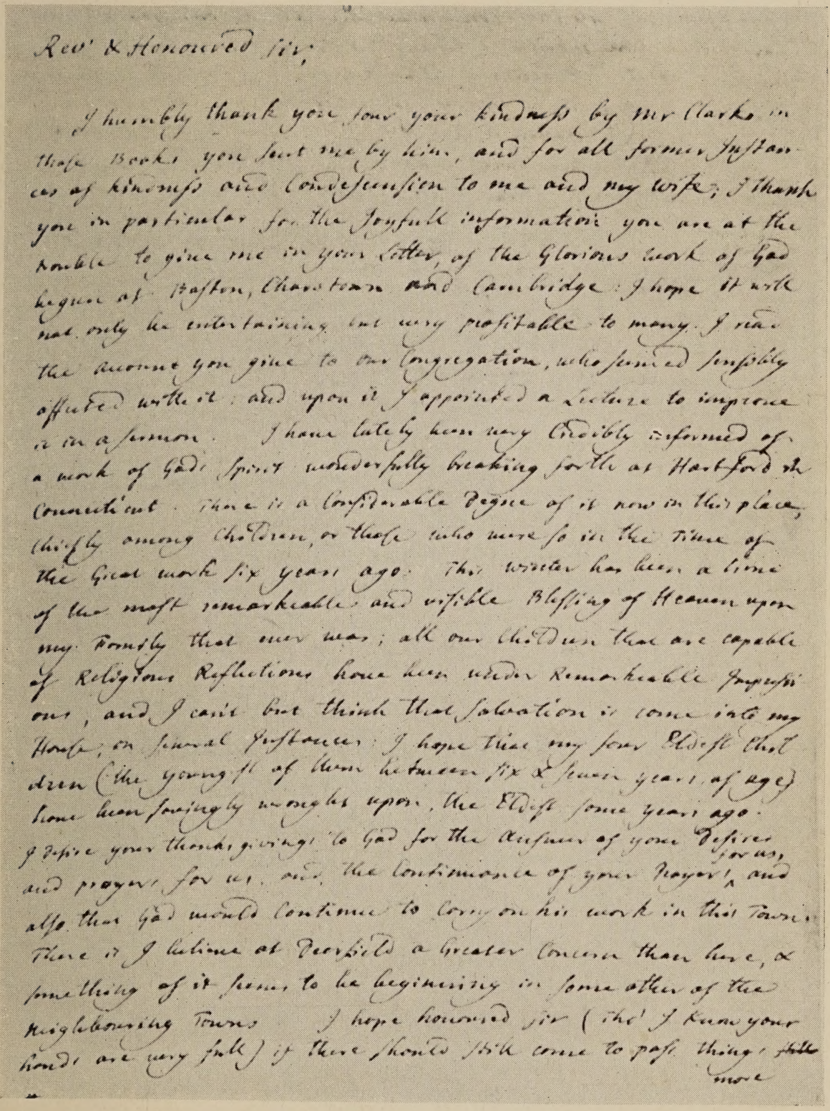
Historically, this was the most important of Edwards's achievements: he proved that not all revivalism was from the devil, that there was a true emotional Christianity as well as its satanic counterfeit. After the Revolution this was to cause the reconquest of New England, and ultimately of the United States, by evangelical Protestantism.

In 1746 he published his "Treatise on the Religious Affections," probably the greatest of his works. It is drenched in the melancholy beauty of unfulfilled hopes and defeated longings. Thanks to the confusion between counterfeit religion and true, he says, "the daughter of Zion in this land now lies on the ground, in such piteous circumstances as we now behold her; with her garments rent, her face disfigured, her nakedness exposed, her limbs broken, and weltering in the blood of her own wounds, and in nowise able to arise; and this, so quickly after her late great joys and hopes." True religion, he explains, consists in a love to God, which is different in kind from any experience felt by the unconverted man; it is caused by a perception of the beauty of God's holiness; and, as he adds significantly enough, it does not consist in a terror of hellfire; too much emphasis, he says, has been laid on this theme. A man who has true religion will naturally incline to do what is good, so that the true convert will know how a Christian ought to behave far more speedily and exactly than the cleverest person who is not a true convert. Of the twelve indications of true religion which Edwards gives he lays the greatest emphasis on the good conduct which inevitably results from it.

Especially does he exalt humility, for pride and selfassurance were the most conspicuous faults of the separatists. "All gracious affections that are a sweet odour to Christ, and that fill the soul of a Christian with a heavenly sweetness and fragrancy, are broken-hearted affections. A truly Christian love, either to God or men, is a humble broken-hearted love. The desires of the saints, however earnest, are humble desires. Their hope is a humble hope; and their joy, even when it is unspeakable, and full of glory, is a humble broken-hearted joy, and leaves the Christian more poor in spirit and more like a little child, and more disposed to a universal lowliness of behavior." For "how can we suppose our most ardent love and praises appear to them, that do behold the beauty and glory of God without a vail?"

The "Treatise on the Religious Affections" is the fountainhead of modern Puritanism in America. Here, for the first time in American history, are proclaimed with eloquence and intellectual cogency the following ideas: that conversion is an emotional convulsion, sometimes accompanied by physical movements; that one must obey a strict moral code, not to earn prosperity or to escape hellfire, but because goodness itself is lovely; that the conscience of the true Christian is a completely reliable guide in all moral problems; that the surest test of true Christianity is its result in moral behavior. These four ideas are the cornerstones of the evangelical Protestantism of the nineteenth century.

Two years later Edwards supplied a practical demon-



Revd & Honoured Sir,

I humbly thank you for your kindness by Mr Clarke in those Books you sent me by him, and for all former Instances of kindness and Condescension to me and my wife; I thank you in particular for the Joyfull information you are at the trouble to give me in your Letter, of the Glorious work of God begun at Boston, Charlstown and Cambridge. I hope it will not only be entertaining but very profitable to many. I read the Account you give to our Congregation, who seemed sensibly affected with it: and upon it I appointed a Lecture to improve it in a sermon. I have lately been very Credibly informed of a work of God's Spirit wonderfully breaking forth at Hartford in Connecticut. There is a Considerable Degree of it now in this place, chiefly among Children, or those who were so in the time of the Great work six years ago. This winter has been a time of the most remarkable and visible Blessing of Heaven upon my Family that ever was; all our Children that are capable of Religious Reflections have been under Remarkable Impressions, and I can't but think that Salvation is come into my House, in several Instances. I hope that my four Eldest Children (the youngest of them between six & seven years of age) have been savingly wrought upon, the Eldest some years ago. I desire your thanksgivings to God for the Answer of your Desires and prayers for us, and the Continuance of your Prayers for us, and also that God would Continue to Carry on his work in this Town. There is I believe at Deerfield a Greater Concern than here, & something of it seems to be beginning in some other of the neighbouring Towns. I hope honoured sir (tho' I know your hands are very full) if there should still come to pass things ~~still~~ more

(From the Colman Papers, owned by the Massachusetts Historical Society.)

A LETTER FROM JONATHAN EDWARDS TO REV. DR. BENJAMIN COLMAN

stration of what he meant by true Christianity by publishing the diary of David Brainerd. This was the youth who had been expelled from Yale for saying that Tutor Whittelsey had no more grace than a chair. Brainerd had regarded his expulsion as a terrible disgrace; he had sometimes come skulking back to New Haven to see his old classmates, but dared not show himself in public for fear of being sent to prison as an exhorter. Edwards had tried to persuade Clap to give him a degree. He had afterwards gone as a missionary to the Indians in New Jersey; and had been so successful that, according to reports in a Boston newspaper, one could not walk in the woods near his house without disturbing Indians at their devotions. In 1747, ill with consumption, he left the Indians, and went to live with the Edwardses, where his fervency in prayer was much appreciated. He formed a curious relationship with their second daughter, Jerusha; they were betrothed to be married, and Jerusha at any rate was deeply in love, though Brainerd informed her that, fond as he was of her, he was still fonder of his brother John; Jerusha nursed him devotedly, and traveled to Boston with him; unable to marry in this world, they looked forward to being with each other in heaven. Brainerd died after a few months, and Jerusha followed him the next spring; Edwards was so affected by her death that, when asked by a brother minister a few days later to lead his family in prayer, he replied that he dare not open his mouth for fear he should break down in tears; he was much comforted, however, by the belief that she was among the saved and was not, therefore, in hell.

Brainerd's diary belongs to the pathology of the religious life; he was forever longing to be "delivered from the Clogs of Flesh and Sense," and crying out that his heart was "like a Nest of Vipers, or a Cage of unclean and hateful Birds." Edwards added an account of Brainerd's life and piety, and described his last illness in all its revolting details. His chief object was to show the separatists what true religion was like. The separatist apologists, in reply, claimed Brainerd as one of themselves and attacked Edwards bitterly.

Edwards did not, however, believe in persecution. In a letter to his cousin, the minister of Hartford, who had wished to excommunicate a number of separatists, he spoke out in favor of liberty of conscience; and argued that the offenders were ignorant people honestly deluded, who should be won back to the fold by sympathy.

In Connecticut the persecution continued until the Revolution; the General Assembly ignored the petitions of the separatists, which varied from philosophical defenses of toleration in the phraseology of John Locke to threats that, if their pleas were denied, Jehovah's vengeance would overwhelm Connecticut. Some of them became Baptists; some of them rejoined the established order; some of them endured to the end. After the capture of Quebec they began to imitate their ancestors and seek freedom in a strange land: stern fanatical farmers sold their lands and piled their goods upon ox-carts, and began the trek into the wilderness; up the river valleys into the mountain fastnesses of Vermont, or across the ranges of the Berkshire Hills to the banks of the Hudson River, marched the separatists, congregation by congregation; the worldliness, the persecutions, of old New England were left behind; in a new world they would pray to Jehovah and bring up their children in the fear of hell; with tight-lipped intolerant mouths and the light of religious madness flickering in their eyes, they drove their ox-carts into the trackless wilderness. The day of the covered wagon had begun.

# CHAPTER XIII

## DREAMS OF THE MILLENNIUM

EDWARDS never ceased to hope that the Millennium was close at hand. God had done amazing things in New England; and however much self-confidence and "intemperate, unhallowed zeal" might provoke Him to withdraw His aid and allow Satan to rage, it was not His custom to breathe upon men's hearts idly and without plan. When New England had learned to rely upon Him completely, the flood would return with redoubled force. God's kingdom was progressing like the spring, "with now and then a pleasant sunshiny season, and now and then an interruption by clouds and stormy winds." "I cannot think otherwise," he said, "than that what has now been doing, is the forerunner of something vastly greater, more pure, and more extensive." "I live upon the brink of the grave, in great infirmity of body, and nothing is more uncertain, than whether I shall live to see it; but I believe God will revive His work again before long."

With this hope in his mind, he examined carefully the prophecies in the Apocalypse. He agreed that there would be many sore conflicts before Christ should have conquered the world; but he formed the opinion that the severest trials of God's people were in the past. At that time this was a very novel interpretation: according to the accepted explanation of prophecy, the slaying of the witnesses, that is to say, the almost total extinction of genuine Christianity, was still in the future. Edwards's opinion was considered by many to be erroneous, but ultimately became accepted as one of his most important contributions to theology. It greatly increased the activity of the Protestant churches: for, as Edwards's biographer explains, Christians had hitherto shrunk from working for the coming of the Messiah, "inasmuch as it was, in effect, to labor and pray for the almost total extinction of the Church of Christ, during a period of indefinite extent, as well as to labor and pray, if speedy success should crown their efforts, for the destruction, if not of their own lives, yet those of their children and immediate descendants." But when Edwards's opinion was accepted, then Christians everywhere, no longer afraid lest too great a success should necessarily extinguish the church and end their lives, pressed on with preparations for the Millennium, and launched numbers of missionary enterprises against the papists and the heathen.

Edwards during the last fifteen years of his life watched very carefully for signs of the coming Millennium, convinced that, even though God had deserted New England, He was still carrying forward the true faith in other parts of the world. His writings had made his name familiar in Scotland; and three or four Scottish ministers entered into correspondence with him, and gave him news of God's doings on that side of the Atlantic. The correspondence was difficult to maintain, since there was no postal system; the Reverend Thomas Prince, of Boston, acted as intermediary, but he had a habit of forgetting about letters entrusted to his charge, and of then informing enquirers that he had never received them; occasionally letters given to him were lost completely; but every six months or so a bulletin from Scotland did actually penetrate to Northampton.

Edwards discussed with his Scottish friends the advance of God's kingdom, giving his reasons for doubting that the number of the beast in the Apocalypse referred to King Louis XV of France. They in return told him what promising signs of the Millennium were to be seen in Great Britain; one of the clerks of the Privy Council, formerly a deist, had written in defense of Christianity; a member of the House of Commons had also defended Christianity; the King and the Prince and Princess of Wales were disposed to favor Congregationalism; the Princesses Amelia and Caroline had been awakened, and one of them at least converted; the Archbishop of Canterbury had shown signs of genuine piety; several of the clergy of the Church of England had preached the doctrines of grace; several of the British magistrates had been very zealous in enforcing the laws against vice; and the Prince of Orange, now Stadtholder of the Netherlands, had shown himself eminently religious. These good tidings Edwards passed on to his friends, and along with news of revivals in New Jersey and in Virginia, they compensated to some degree for the lethargy of New England.

But it was in political news that Edwards found his chief reason for expecting the Millennium.

In 1744 the British colonies were involved in a new war with the French, and many of those converted in 1741 plunged into fighting the papists with the same ardor that they had formerly displayed in the war with the devil. In that year a comet appeared, and was considered by most people to be a portent of evil; perhaps, as one of Edwards's clerical friends remarked in his diary, of "some great devastation of the Brittish nation." But Protestant fervor was not to be damped; and when Governor Shirley proposed the capture of Louisburg on Cape Breton Island, at the entrance of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the whole of New England rallied to the cause. It was a crusade: chaplains armed themselves with hatchets to destroy the images in the papist churches; and Whitefield supplied the motto, "Nil desperandum Christo duce."

The reduction of Louisburg was a great piece of luck. A band of untrained farmers and fishermen, commanded by a merchant, and under orders from a lawyer, set sail against a fortress surrounded by walls thirty feet high and a ditch thirty feet deep, and garrisoned by soldiers of a regular army. Shirley had given the commander, William Pepperell, detailed instructions for surprising the French and taking the town by storm; drifts of snow, would, in his opinion, enable the New Englanders to climb the walls. As it turned out, ice prevented them from even reaching it, and all through April the expedition was detained at Canso, on the northeastern extremity of Nova Scotia. On the twenty-ninth, undeterred by the shortage of pilots, guns, small-arms, provisions, and experience, they sailed for Cape Breton Island. In full view and range of the French, the New Englanders dragged their guns through the breakers up the surf and across a half-frozen morass, where they sank up to their knees; under cover of night and fog, they gained a range of hills behind the town. The shortage of provisions was supplied by the capture of a transport, and of siege weapons by the discovery of a battery buried on the shore; the French retired from an outwork under a mistaken impression of the strength of their assailants, and these guns also were trained upon Louisburg. One stormy night a flotilla of whaleboats attacked an island which commanded the town, but the beating of the waves on the rocky shore foiled the assault, and nearly two hundred men were lost. The besiegers had no tents; they slept in the open air or under canvas crudely stretched over branches of trees; fortunately the weather was mild. They frolicked during the week and heard sermons on the Sabbath, just as if they were at home; discipline was lax, and according to a Boston contemporary, the siege was conducted "in a tumultuary, random manner, like a Cambridge Commencement." Nevertheless, after seven weeks' bombardment, the French surrendered; their commander was weak and his troops mutinous. But for good luck the expedition might have failed a dozen times over. Next day several thousand French Indians approached to raise the siege; and there was a change in the weather which would have made the New England position on the hills impossible.

The news of victory reached Boston before sunrise on a July morning. The excitement was enormous; the bells were rung, the guns boomed out from Castle William, the ships in the harbor flew all their colors, every house in the town was decorated, and in the evening drums were beaten and there were bonfires and fireworks. To New England it was not luck at all; it was God's Providence, bringing to nought the schemes of papists and blessing his Protestant Englishmen. There were thanksgiving services everywhere; and everywhere the ministers told the story of the siege, showing how Providence alone had caused its capture and God deserved all the glory.

The conviction that New England was under God's special protection grew even stronger a year later: the French fitted out a great armada to recapture Louisburg and avenge the insult by laying waste the coast of Massachusetts; no preparations by Governor Shirley or General Pepperell could possibly have averted calamity; but where man was helpless, God intervened; dysentery and typhoid attacked the crews; the commanding admiral died; the second in command, opposed in a council of war, fell into a fury and committed suicide; and the greater part of the fleet was driven by a storm upon the rocky coast of Nova Scotia. For generations New Englanders loved to tell how the armada was wrecked on the very Sabbath evening when, in the Old South Meeting House in Boston, the Reverend Thomas Prince was praying that God might blow with his winds and scatter them.

The capture of Louisburg was the most important event in the history of New England. It was a bigger success than any Great Britain herself won in that war; it was followed in rapid succession by the defeat of Fontenoy, the landing of the Young Pretender, the defeat of Prestonpans, and the march to Derby—a sequence carefully noted in many a New England diary; and at the peace of Aix la Chapelle British diplomatists surrendered the conquest of their American subjects. When the London newspapers agreed with those in Boston that the capture was a miracle almost without parallel in history, and declared that the New World was outdistancing the old, then New Englanders began to feel themselves superior to the mother country, and almost worthy of independence.

Northampton contributed thirty-eight men to the expedition, and held special meetings to pray for victory. It was also in continuous danger from Indian raids. From 1745 to 1749 the savages were on the warpath; they hid among the woods and descended the rivers in their war-canoes; they killed unguarded farmers and farmers' wives while they were pasturing cattle or gathering corn; they ambushed the militia who marched out to catch them; they slew oxen, destroyed crops, and burnt houses; nearly one hundred and fifty persons were either killed or captured in western Massachusetts during these years. The English offered rewards for scalps, seventy-five pounds for men, half that sum for women and children; and they enlisted dogs for smelling out ambushes; but the Indians could not be checked. Most of the fighting was up the Connecticut Valley or across the hills to the northwest, thirty miles from Northampton; but lives were lost in neighboring towns; and in Northampton itself "mounts" were built—small wooden forts whose floors were raised seven feet from the ground; there was one such mount at Edwards's house. Men from Northampton were continually engaged in fighting, especially at Fort Massachusetts at the foot of Mount Greylock, which was considered the key to the frontier. In 1746 men were enlisted for a projected expedition against Canada; but after they had lain in arms for months, at a great expense to the colony, the War Office in London changed its plans, and they were disbanded. These years of campaigning had the worst possible effect on public morals; they also brought certain persons together in a way which was to have serious consequences for Edwards.

Edwards was keenly interested in the latest achievements of Providence; and the destruction of the armada he considered to be without parallel since the time of King Hezekiah. These events he believed to have been foretold in the Apocalypse: the pouring out of the sixth vial on the Euphrates obviously denoted the destruction of the wealth of the anti-Christian kingdom, i. e. France; that had surely been accomplished in the reduction of Louisburg, the capture by British seamen of many of their merchantmen, and the almost total ruin of their Indian trade. Thus the sixth vial was already finished with, and only the seventh remained.

His conclusions differed, however, from that of most New Englanders: to them God's kindness was a proof of their own virtue; but Edwards had never accepted the old belief that worldly prosperity was God's reward for obedience; God's methods were more subtle, and his plans more far-reaching, then New England realized; for God's world was a single organism. Moreover, Edwards knew that New England was not virtuous; in his opinion it was very wicked. God had blessed it altogether beyond its deserts; and the obvious conclusion was that He was planning to convert its inhabitants and do great things with them in the future; there would be another revival of religion and then the Messiah would come. "It appears evident to me," he said, "not only that God's mercies are infinitely above the mercies of men; but also that He has in these things gone quite out of the usual course of His Providence;" "it gives me great hope that God's appointed time is approaching."

This deduction was confirmed when one of his Scottish correspondents sent him a letter written by the Bishop of London to the cities of London and Westminster. "The view . . . of the wickedness of those cities is very affecting," wrote Edwards in reply; "the patience of God towards such cities, so full of wickedness, so heinous and horrid in its kinds, and attended with such aggravations, is very astonishing." Obviously, if God not only spared the cities of London and Westminster but favored them beyond the French, he must have a use for them, in His Providence, which was not yet apparent.

Edwards, therefore, copying a plan already put into operation in Scotland, arranged that his congregation and those of his friends should set aside special times to pray for the speedy coming of the Messiah; and he published a treatise on the subject, entitled "An Humble Attempt to promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union among God's People, in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion, and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, pursuant to Scripture Promises, and Prophecies concerning the Last Time."

# BOOK THREE

## THE EXILE

## CHAPTER XIV

## FAMILY FEUD: EDWARDS DEFEATED

WHILE Edwards was composing treatises against the separatists and corresponding with clergymen on the other side of the Atlantic about the imminence of the Millennium, his influence over his parishioners was rapidly slipping away. The common emotion which had bound them to him during the Awakening had declined; he was once more the scholar, his head perpetually in his books, unable to share in the trivial interests of his neighbors; they saw him riding out alone to meditate upon problems of divinity; and he was so absent-minded that he scarcely recognized his friends. Moreover, his religious opinions were becoming more and more unpopular; the people of Northampton had very thoroughly repented of their enthusiasm of 1741 and they saw in Edwards a representative of all that folly which had caused so much damage in New England. His efforts also to enforce a strict moral discipline were resented; the tendencies of the age were all against the pretensions of clergymen. Yet Edwards continued to speak very openly against what he thought sinful; he would preach sermons against extravagance in dress, telling the gentry of Northampton as they sat in their pews that they were worse than the people of Boston, and that Boston, from all he heard, was worse than London.

In 1744 somebody gave information to Edwards that the young people were reading obscene books and learning from them to exchange obscene conversation; what books they were has not been recorded; they may have been Restoration comedies or novels by Aphra Behn; or perhaps an explanation may be found in a note in the Boston *Evening Post* nine years before advertising for sale "The Amours of Count Pulviana," "The Loves of Osmin and Duraxa," and twenty-three more with similar titles. Instead of recommending the talebearer to mind his own business, Edwards brought the matter before the church, and persuaded them to elect a committee of investigation. He then read out a list of names; some were offenders and others witnesses, but he did not specify which were which; represented in the list were most of the leading families in Northampton. The church immediately changed their minds, and refused to give him their assistance. The young people duly assembled at Edwards's house, the boys on the ground floor, the girls in an upper room; but one of the boys brought a ladder and climbed up to the window of the girls' room and poked his head in; and in general, they "behaved with a great deal of insolence;" so that Edwards could do nothing with them.

Gradually there was formed in Northampton a party in opposition to Edwards, which finally won over fully six-sevenths of the population. The families threatened with discipline and disgrace in 1744, most of whom were closely connected with each other by marriage, formed the nucleus; and their leaders were Major Seth Pomeroy and Joseph Hawley. Seth Pomeroy had commanded a company at the siege of Louisburg, and he later became a general; he was accustomed to wear a bright red coat and shoes with enormous buckles; he probably disliked Edwards's sermons against extravagance in dress. At Louisburg he had shared a lodging with Hawley, the twenty-two-year-old son of the man who had committed suicide in 1735 as a result of Edwards's hellfire sermons. Hawley, like Edwards, was a grandson of Solomon Stoddard; intending to become a minister, he had gone to Cambridge to study divinity; there he had acquired liberal opinions; after returning from Louisburg he settled in Northampton as a lawyer; he was a very eloquent and acute controversialist, and he spent much of his time arguing against the old Calvinist doctrines and convincing his fellow-citizens that men's wills were free and that God was too benevolent to damn them to hell merely for not undergoing an emotional conversion. He was a rural democrat, who rose at five to do his farm chores, dressed as a working man, and shaved twice a week.

The hostility of the town, and of the Hawleys in particular, was increased by a misadventure of Elisha Hawley, Joseph's younger brother. A young woman gave birth to twins and claimed Elisha as their father, and he so far acknowledged them as to pay her one hundred and fifty-five pounds for maintenance. Edwards insisted that he ought to marry her, but Elisha considered that he had done all that duty demanded. Joseph earnestly pressed upon his brother his new ideas of the reasonableness and pleasantness of true religion, and advised him that his conversation ought to be "Serious, savoury, manly, and genteel, as becomes a Christian and a man of honor, and not unsavory, smutty, or profane;" but he maintained before the church that the woman was of bad character, and had deliberately gone out to capture his brother, who in all probability was not the father. The dispute smoldered on for two years, and in the summer of 1749 the advice of five other churches was sought; their decision was on the whole in favor of Hawley since they recommended leaving it to his own conscience whether he should marry or not. Elisha consulted his conscience and remained single.

As long as Edwards had the support of his uncle, Colonel Stoddard, his position was unassailable; for Stoddard, the leading "river-god," was the most powerful man in western Massachusetts, and the "squire" of Northampton, where his word was law. But in 1747 Stoddard died, and Edwards lost not only a firm ally but also an adviser whom he had habitually consulted on every problem of church government. Stoddard's successor as commander-in-chief of the Western Division was Israel Williams, of Hatfield.

Williams was the last and proudest of the dynasty of "river-gods" who had ruled the valley of the upper Connecticut since its settlement; he was known as "the monarch of Hampshire." From 1747 to the Revolution he was leader in all the wars against the Indians, clerk of the county court, representative in the General Assembly, and the haughty uncrowned king of western Massachusetts. He built himself a great house in Hatfield: it had large gambrel roofs; it had deep crimson papering and high wainscoting, panelled and carved by hand, in the front rooms; it had immense fireplaces, elaborate hand-carved mantels, and intricately designed corner cupboards; and the front doorstone, with its beaded and molded edges, was the wonder of the Connecticut Valley. He owned one of the only two riding-chairs in Hampshire County, just as his predecessor, Stoddard, had owned the only gold watch and the only set of tea-cups.

Now Israel Williams was a bitter enemy of revivalism and the old Calvinism; and during the Breck case, as already related, he had been snubbed by Edwards; in fourteen years, though paying repeated visits to Northampton and always riding past Edwards's house, he had only deigned to visit him three times. Edwards, nevertheless, had done all he could to repair the breach. In 1740 Williams had refused to allow Whitefield to preach in Hatfield, though the voice of the revivalist could be heard from across the river as he addressed the inhabitants of Hadley; and the Great Awakening had increased the breach between the two men.

Israel Williams, besides being the most powerful man in the county, was also a member of a very numerous and influential family. He was, incidentally, like Joseph Hawley, a grandson of Solomon Stoddard, and therefore Edwards's first cousin; and there was, apparently, a feud between these two branches of the Stoddard family, though no evidence survives to indicate its causes. As early as 1730 Mrs. Edwards's brother Benjamin, then living with the Edwardses at Northampton, was offered a pastorate at Deerfield. The Reverend William Williams, father of Israel, at once set himself to get the invitation revoked; he talked vaguely about wild oats, and hinted that Benjamin was not to be trusted with women, and finally came out with the definite testimony that he was "vain, apish, and jovial, particularly among females." After this damning description Benjamin had to go home to New Haven, and Deerfield ordained Jonathan Ashley, who married Dorothy Williams and became the most virulent of all Edwards's enemies; his enmity was probably the keener because he was cordially hated by his own parish. In the next twenty years the feud increased, and drew in all the members of the Williams family: Solomon Williams, minister of Lebanon, and Elisha Williams, formerly rector of Yale and Edwards's tutor at Wethersfield, brother and half-brother of Israel, became infected with it; and from about 1744 Israel and Elisha, convinced that society demanded Edwards's ejection, became the secret correspondents and counsellors of the disaffected party in Northampton. The campaigns at Louisburg and along the northwestern frontiers gave ample opportunity for the various schemers to get acquainted with each other.

Edwards, moreover, was rapidly becoming separated from the ministers of the district; the vast majority of them were now enemies of revivalism, and many of them had liberal tendencies. Even Edwards's brother-in-law Hopkins, the minister of West Springfield, strongly disapproved of him; and his own sister, Mrs. Hopkins, wrote in her diary complaints against Jonathan for being so obstinate and wrongheaded. Some ministers, also, had personal grievances: there were men like Robert Breck, whose ordination Edwards had tried to prevent because he disapproved of their principles; there were others, like the minister of Hatfield, who were under the thumb of Israel Williams; and no less than five of them were either connected by marriage with the Williams family or belonged to a collateral branch of it.

Thus, both in Northampton and among his colleagues, Edwards was almost isolated. The various groups of enemies—the disaffected parishioners, the Williams family, and the anti-Edwardean clergy—were in communication with each other; and Israel and Elisha Williams, and some of the ministers, like Mr. Ashley of Deerfield, were urging on the townspeople. As soon as a pretext arose, there would be a storm. And it was not very long before the unsuspecting Edwards gave his enemies all the opportunity they wanted and sealed his own dismissal.

In the seventeenth century church and state in New

England were almost identical; but privilege in both was confined to a minority, about a fifth of the adult males, who had made some progress in the knowledge of Calvinist theology and the practice of Calvinist virtues. This caused discontent among the majority, not at all because they wanted any political privileges, but because they had no status at all in the church and their children were denied baptism. So in 1663 was instituted the Half-Way Covenant, which could be taken by anybody who appeared to have even a tiny portion of saving faith; persons who took the covenant could neither go up to the communion table nor vote at elections; what distinguished them was that their children were baptized, and that if they sinned, they were disciplined by the church. But the pretense that the covenant represented some degree of saving faith was soon forgotten: everybody could take it who was not of openly scandalous life; and though perhaps a third of the community never connected themselves with the church, the ministers expected everybody to do so; for it was commonly believed that if children were left unbaptized, their damnation was certain.

Solomon Stoddard, Edwards's predecessor at Northampton, had adopted the Half-Way Covenant and improved on it: New Englanders believed, on the authority of St. Paul, that if an unconverted person took the communion his damnation would be certain; and people therefore refrained from taking it unless they were absolutely convinced that they had already received saving faith;

Stoddard, having himself been converted while actually eating the communion bread, had the best reason for disbelieving this theory; and he therefore persuaded his parishioners that they might go up to the Lord's Table while still unconverted; a sacrament was not a privilege for those already converted, but a means of converting the unconverted. The church at Northampton had acted on Stoddard's theory since the end of the seventeenth century, and had been imitated by many other churches in Hampshire County.

By 1746 Edwards had formed the conclusion that Stoddardeanism was contrary to the will of God; a sacrament was a privilege, which nobody could enjoy until he had first made a profession of saving faith. He determined that henceforth he would not allow any fresh person to come up to the communion table who had not made the profession. Owing to the deadness of religion in Northampton he was not able to put his determination into practice until the end of 1748. A young man then offered himself as a candidate.

As soon as the town realized what was happening they were in a tumult; this was their opportunity for getting rid of Edwards, and they realized it at once. They accused him of having selfish motives for the change; this would enormously increase his power over the church; he would prevent anybody whom he disliked from becoming a member, merely by declaring that his profession of saving faith was unsatisfactory. The wildest rumors flew round: Edwards was claiming that he could tell with infallible certainty whether a man was converted; he was preaching that conversion was a sudden and unmistakable experience; that every convert had absolute assurance of his own conversion; in fact he was no better than a separatist; their minister was another of those crazy fanatics who were a threat to all order and civilization. All the families in Northampton who had chafed against their minister's puritanism began to rave against clerical tyranny day and night. Israel Williams in Hatfield, Chester Williams across the ferry in Hadley, Jonathan Ashley up the valley in Deerfield, Robert Breck in Springfield, Solomon Williams over the hills in Lebanon, Elisha Williams down the river in Wethersfield, waited eagerly for the defeat of revivalism and the downfall of their enemy.

A young woman told Edwards that she would make the required profession; but she was informed that there would be a "tumult" if she did so, and her courage failed her. Edwards, innocently imagining that his people would give way as soon as they knew his reasons, wished to explain them in a series of sermons; but he realized that his congregation would not listen to them; he might provoke a riot; so he wrote a treatise in defense of his proposal, and sent it to Boston to be printed; the committee of the church agreed that it would be unjust to expel him for his opinion without first discovering why he held it. In August, 1749, twenty copies of the treatise arrived, and were distributed about the town. There was a lull, while the town debated what its next move should be; Edwards hoped at first that they were reading his treatise.

There was a drought all over New England that summer; the corn was parched in the fields, and ministers everywhere were earnestly pleading with God to send them rain. The separatists were triumphant; this was the first of the plagues with which God would smite the established order for persecuting the true church; they laughed in the faces of the clergy, because after all their prayers there was still not a cloud in the sky. But in Northampton minister and people would not come together, even to save the harvest; and even the communion had been abandoned.

In October eleven townspeople signed a paper urging that an agreement should be made as quickly as possible, or if that were impossible, that Edwards should cease to be their minister. Edwards pleaded that he should be allowed to explain his reasons from the pulpit, since it was plain that scarcely anybody had read his book; by a popular vote his plea was denied. But the leaders of the townspeople consented to give him a hearing, on condition that he would give a written copy of each sermon, before he preached it, to some other minister, who would reply to it from Edwards's pulpit as soon as Edwards had sat down. On the advice of Elisha Williams they did not press this offer; Elisha declared that it would "tend to parties," meaning apparently that Edwards might win over some of the opposition; he was busy, down in Wethersfield, studying Edwards's treatise and collecting material for a reply to it.

It was then agreed that a council of churches should be summoned, and Edwards persuaded the parish committee that it should be chosen by mutual consent. But at the next church meeting Seth Pomeroy got up and explained that Edwards plainly regarded his own selfish interests more than the good of the church and that he had laid a snare to entrap the innocent citizens of Northampton, and much more to the same purpose; and the church, being greatly alarmed by this exposure of Edwards's wickedness, elected ten more persons to the committee, which then proposed that, unless Edwards change his mind, he be expelled from the pastorate, and that a council be called chosen solely from the Hampshire churches. Edwards's reply was characteristic: he wrote a letter demonstrating, very logically and for all the world as if he were confuting a heretical theologian, that the votes of the committee were neither just nor self-consistent. The committee were merely infuriated; they marched down to his house, all fifteen of them, and Seth Pomeroy informed Edwards that they had read his long letter, and that "it was abundance of trouble and difficulty the church was put to," and that the committee were agreed that Edwards was the cause of all the trouble; he advised Edwards to give the matter his "serious and solemn consideration;" he then drew a paper out of his pocket, and said they had decided to call a council to dismiss Edwards from his pastorate; and the churches to be summoned should all be in Hampshire County. This was December the sixth, 1749.

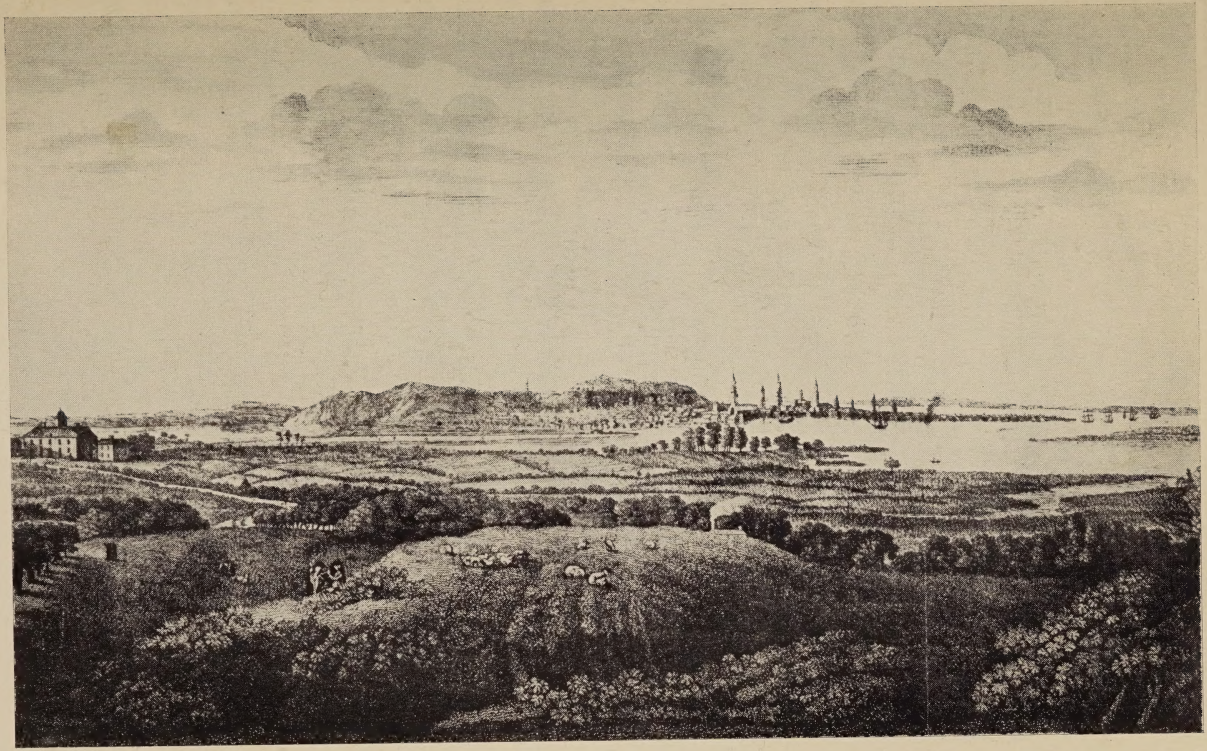
After they had gone, Edwards wrote to his friend Bellamy. "The People," he said, "have a Resolution to get me out of the Town speedily, that disdains all Controul or Check. . . . They have already had three or four conventions and have a standing Committee of nineteen men (chiefly of such as are strongly engaged) to oversee and manage the affair effectually. And we have another committee of the church of fifteen men (in the choice of which they picked out those that are most violent) and these appointed for the same End. . . . I have been openly reproached in church meetings, as apparently regarding my own Temporal interest more than the Honour of Christ and the good of the Church. As to the affair of a publick dispute, it was quickly at an End after you went from hence. The People at their next Parish meeting rejected it, as what would tend to make Parties among us. They seemed to be determined that the arguments for my opinion should never be publickly heard, if it be possible to prevent it. . . . I need God's Counsel in every step I take and every word I speak; so all that I do and say is watched by the multitude around me with the utmost strictness and with eyes of the greatest uncharitableness and severity and let me do and say what I will, my words and actions are represented in dark colors, and the state of Things is come to that, they seem to think it greatly concerns 'em to blacken me, and represent me in Odious Colours to the world, to justify their own Conduct. . . . They seem to be sensible that now their character can't stand unless it be on the Ruin of mine. They have publickly voted that they will have no more sacraments; and they have no way to justify themselves in that, but to represent me as very bad. I therefore desire, dear sir, your fervent prayers to God. If He be for me, who can be against me? If He be with me, I need not fear ten thousands of the People. But I know myself unworthy of his Presence and help, yet would humbly trust in his infinite Grace and all sufficience. My love to your spouse. I am your Brother and near Friend, Jonathan Edwards." He enclosed the manuscript of Bellamy's "True Religion Delineated," with the notes he had made on it.

It was now agreed by everybody that Edwards could not remain pastor of Northampton; but a minister could not be dismissed without the consent of a council of churches; and for six more months Edwards and his people argued as to how the council should be appointed. The people insisted that the choice be confined to Hampshire County; for they knew that all but two or three of the Hampshire ministers disliked Edwards personally and disapproved of his attempt to abolish Stoddardeanism; a council so chosen would lay the blame of the separation on Edwards. He insisted that he should choose as his representatives any churches he pleased; he considered it his duty to see that his people were compelled to face the truth. Moreover, if the council blamed him for the quarrel, he could not hope to obtain another pastorate; he had, as he wrote to one of his Scotch friends, a "numerous and chargeable family." "Most places in New England that want a minister," he explained, "would not be forward to invite one with so chargeable a family, nor one so advanced in years—being forty-six the fifth day of last October. I am fitted for no other business but study. I would make a poor hand at getting a living by any secular employment." So that Edwards was really fighting not only for honor and justice, but for life itself.

In this crisis the Breck case returned to plague him; he had maintained then that a church council must be restricted to the churches of the neighborhood; he was now arguing that it might be chosen from any in New England. His justification was disingenuous, and merely illustrates the fact that when a man considers right and wrong to be at stake he does not usually pay much regard to mere legality. He used his superb capacity for subtle argumentation to evade the parallel; and he added that he had had no hand at all in opposing Breck's ordination by the Boston ministers; he was not even in New England at the time; all his crime "was merely defending what others had done at their request;" he conveniently forgot that he had written to his colleagues expressing his full approval of every step they had made. But in any case the question was "what are God's rules," and not "what once was, or now is, my opinion." Edwards's defense was the masterpiece of an unrivalled intellectual dualist; as an exhibition of logical virtuosity it excels even his "Freedom of the Will." But underneath all his arguments is his belief that his cause was the cause of God; if a clergyman were to become an Episcopalian, now, or deny Christ's divinity, or be accused of drunkenness, then of course, agreed Edwards, he would have no right to appoint half the council; "it would be ridiculous for the accused to insist that half his judges should be men who approved of drunkenness." The fact that in the eyes of his enemies he himself was just such a person did not occur to him.

But in any case his enemies were quite unable to cope with the stream of dissertations on the rights of ministers, the customs of Hampshire County, and the ecclesiastical constitution of New England, which poured out from Edwards's study; they made little effort to answer them; probably they did not read them. But to justify their conduct, they were anxious to secure an answer to Edwards's treatise on "Qualifications for Communion." Elisha Williams had sailed for England late in 1749; so they applied to Peter Clark, of Danvers, who was rumored to be planning a confutation; Edwards wrote to Clark to explain his real opinions, and Clark then refused to oppose him. But the task was undertaken by Solomon Williams, who took over his brother's notes. When his work was finished, a copy was given to every family in Northampton.

The controversy was finally laid before an advisory council of the five nearest churches; the ministers of four of them were Edwards's enemies. They suggested that Edwards should be allowed to choose a small minority from outside the county. Edwards urged them to state in so many words that the people of Northampton ought to hear his



(*From an old print.*)

BOSTON FROM THE DORCHESTER ROAD

sermons; they refused, but he forced them to admit, with great reluctance, that he had a right to preach them. He thereupon began to do so; and though very few Northampton people attended, there were large crowds from the neighboring towns. This infuriated the townspeople; they requested Edwards to stop; when he refused, about fifty of them put their signatures to a letter to the neighboring ministers; they asked for some minister to come and confute Edwards, and threatened that if nobody came, they would end his sermons by violence. The ministers came together in great alarm; they were as eager as anybody to get rid of Edwards, but they had some respect for the dignity of their profession; a deputation visited Edwards, but he refused to stop preaching; and after a long council of war the ministers went home with nothing decided.

The townspeople continued to rage against everything Edwards did, but seemed incapable of agreeing on any decisive action; so he took affairs into his own hands. He called a church meeting, and read out a brief statement of eighty-one words for the people to vote on; it stated, quite simply, that a council should be summoned to examine the controversy, and if necessary to dismiss him. "There was," says Edwards, "much discourse concerning this draft. It was read publicly and distinctly three or four times, and it was desired that each particular passage of it might be considered and scanned. It was offered to such as desired to view and examine it, and handed from one to another. Some amendments were proposed; but the amendments did not seem to be liked so well as the first draft. It was then put to vote; and it was questioned whether it was a vote. Then it was desired that all might sit down and hold up their hands for some considerable time, and then it appeared plainly to be a vote, was generally acknowledged to be so, by such as had appeared most to oppose it, and was not questioned by more than one or two. And one of them, viz., Major Pomeroy, said it was generally allowed to be a vote, and therefore intimated it to be his mind, that it should pass as such."

So the church having swallowed its dignity and accepted a vote proposed by Edwards, and Major Pomeroy having deigned to give his consent, they went on to discuss the composition of the council. This required four parish meetings, six church meetings, and thirty-eight days. Edwards watched their maneuverings with amused contempt; they were helpless except when he presided at their meetings, but they were terribly reluctant to consent to anything which emanated from him; he even went away for ten days, and left them to their own resources. On May 3rd they finally agreed to his proposal that the council should consist of ten churches, and that he should choose five, two of which might be from outside the county.

The council met on June 22nd. One of the churches nominated by Edwards refused to send a lay delegate; so his enemies had ten votes to his nine; among the ten was Robert Breck. Seth Pomeroy and Joseph Hawley managed the case for Northampton. By a majority of one the council declared that the relation between Edwards and his people should be dissolved, but added that in their opinion Edwards's change of mind was sincere, and recommended him for the work of the ministry in some church which shared his opinion. The nine nominees of Edwards signed a protest, saying that as no attempt had yet been made to settle the question at issue by reasoning, the dismissal was premature; and they added that Edwards needed no recommendation from them since "his praise is in most of the churches through the land."

Edwards's twenty-three years of service to the church of Northampton were at an end. The next Sabbath, in his farewell sermon, he bade his people au revoir to the Day of Judgment.

It is entertaining to watch, in the progress of events, for the workings of any kind of justice.

Northampton could not find another minister for several years, and had to endure the services of temporary visitors; one of them was so deplorable that Hawley expelled him from the pulpit in the middle of his sermon; their ministerless condition was considered by the people of Northampton as a dreadful indication of God's anger. They did not, however, become converted to Edwardean strictness; the young people took up sleighing, and were soon racing over the snowy hills to dances at distant farm houses, with a negro fiddler sitting behind them.

Israel Williams ruled Hampshire County until the Revolution. In the 'sixties, because his sons at Harvard and

Yale were not graded as high as he thought they deserved, he tried to found a new university in the Connecticut Valley; one of his cousins was to be president, and several other Williamses were to be trustees. He was a loyalist, like most of his class; and in his old age his former subjects rebelled against him, dragged him in triumph to Boston, and deposited him in the prison.

Seth Pomeroy won fresh laurels in the last French and Indian war, and increased in years and reputation; he died at the age of seventy-three, while fighting for the colonies in the War of Independence.

The main burden of retribution seems to have fallen on Joseph Hawley. In 1754 he wrote to Edwards, to ask pardon for his misconduct. Edwards replied on six closely written foolscap pages, pointing out that Hawley had sinned even more grievously than he realized; Hawley admitted it. After Edwards's death, still worried by his misconduct, he published in a Boston newspaper a letter confessing how bitterly he regretted it; he compared himself to Balaam, Ahitophel, and Judas; "nothing," he said, "but that infinite grace and mercy, which saved some of the betrayers and murderers of our Blessed Lord, and the persecutors of his martyrs, can pardon me."

But to Joseph Hawley the pardon of infinite grace and mercy was denied. He was converted back to Calvinism; he became a leader of the Massachusetts General Assembly, and was one of the earliest and boldest advocates of American independence. But his career was terribly handicapped by religious melancholia; for months at a time he would sit, incapable of any mental effort, smoking and brooding over the certainty of his damnation. His state of mind can be judged from a meditation found among his papers.

"If Christ should come this night to the final judgment he would come in flaming fire, to take vengeance on me, on my cursed soul, I say; think, oh my cursed hell-hardened soul, how thou would shiver, how thou would shake, how thou wouldst despair this moment to hear of the great archangel's trumpet send forth its loud and shrill echoes, to hear his dreadful voice, Arise ye dead, and come, ye dead and living, to judgement, to Christ's most awful tribunal. My soul, think closely, to see the heavens rend, and Christ Jesus, with all his glorious and dreadful retinue attending him, consuming and devouring fire going before him, coming to take vengeance, on me, oh my soul, from every quarter of heaven echoing forth claps of thunder, the earth burning, quaking, and breaking. . . . Tremble, my soul, to hear the blackest catalogue of my sins read; for each of which thou, conscience, wilt gash me, as the physician's keen anatomising knife, gripe and bite, like hot pincers, or red hot teeth. . . . Finally, to be locked up in the dungeon of eternal horror, anguish and despair."

There is more than an echo in these words of the hell-fire sermons of his cousin and minister whom he expelled.

# CHAPTER XV

## FAMILY FEUD: EDWARDS VICTORIOUS

NEVER in his life did Edwards shine more nobly than in these eighteen months of martyrdom. He treated the townspeople as reasonable beings, who would listen to intellectual argument; but that was a mistake, not an error of character. Never for a moment did he falter in his belief that his cause was right; he was convinced that his enemies were the enemies of God, and when necessary he did not hesitate to say so in unqualified words. But in the whole controversy he showed no trace of bitterness or personal rancor; the account which he wrote of it is not only sober, just, and good-tempered, it is actually amusing; he looked down upon his enemies from the pinnacle of his own untroubled conscience as if he were a god. An onlooker remarked in his diary that he never saw in Edwards the slightest trace of anger or grief; he seemed like a man of God whose happiness was beyond the reach of his enemies; by nothing, he added, were the townspeople more infuriated than by their obvious failure to ruffle his serenity.

He had his own accounts to settle with God; for "God," he said, "knows the sinfulness of my heart, and the great and sinful deficiencies and offences which I have been guilty of, in the course of my ministry at Northampton;" but before man he knew that he was beyond reproach.

After his death his theory triumphed; his attack on Stoddardeanism and the Half-Way Covenant made as great a revolution in the ecclesiastical theory of Puritanism as the "Treatise on the Religious Affections" had made in its ethics. Until the revocation of the charter New England had been a holy commonwealth, governed by the saints; and the Half-Way Covenant, which allowed any member of the state to become connected with the church, was a consequence of the union of the church and state. But now the state was no longer governed by saints; it was necessary either to repeal the Half-Way Covenant and separate church and state, or to abandon the old Puritan belief that religion was a communication of God to the individual soul which comparatively few people experienced. New England was drifting towards the latter alternative when Edwards led the way to the repeal of the Half-Way Covenant. By the triumph of his doctrine the true church became once more a minority in the devil's world; and religion was neither collective worship nor collective performance of duty, but personal experience.

But for Edwards in 1750 the most pressing problem was bread and butter. He had a family of ten, the youngest being a baby of two months old; his wife had recently had a severe attack of rheumatic fever; his own health was very precarious; he owned land in Northampton, but could not realize on it for several years; the town refused him the usual privilege of using the ministry lands; three of his daughters were about to be married; and a widowed sister with a family was in urgent need of help. Early in 1752 he was two thousand pounds in debt; his family had to spend their time in making lace and painting fans, for sale in Boston; and he had to write his notes on the backs of bills and the margins of newspapers.

For more than a year he remained in Northampton. The score of householders who had supported him through thick and thin proposed in the spring of 1751 that a separate Edwardean church should be formed; they called a council to consider it. Edwards's enemies were at once alert; they spread a rumor that the council was trying to reimpose Edwards on the Northampton church, and presented to the council a bitter personal attack on Edwards himself. Only the first four pages of this document have survived: the rest appears to have been destroyed by Joseph Hawley after his recantation. Edwards said it was "full of direct, bold slander," and Hawley afterwards confessed that it "contained divers direct, grievous, and criminal charges," and was "a scandalous, abusive, injurious libel." A New England church which wanted to get rid of its minister often accused him of drunkenness and sexual misbehavior; probably, however, nobody dared to say such a thing about Edwards. There was also a pamphlet controversy about his dismissal; the five anti-Edwardean ministers informed the world that they had dismissed him for insisting that nobody might take the communion unless he first declared that he had been sanctified and was going to heaven; this was to brand Edwards as a separatist; yet, as his friends proved in their reply, he had several times quite explicitly told that very council that he had never maintained anything of the kind.

He was invited to Scotland; but though he was willing to accept the Presbyterian system, he would not risk a fresh beginning in a strange country among people who might dislike him; his Scotch admirers also sent him money. In the summer of 1751 he agreed to go to Stockbridge, as minister to a few English families and as missionary to the Indians.

Stockbridge was forty miles west of Northampton, a frontier settlement in the woods between two ranges of the Berkshire Hills. The Reverend John Sergeant had preached to the Housatonnucks there from 1734 till his death in 1749; he had been a tutor at Yale, and was therefore, it is to be supposed, a man of some intelligence, but after fourteen years of wrestling with the language of the Indians he was still unable to speak it, and had had little success in converting them. His difficulties had been increased by his interpreter, a woman who had been captured by the Indians in her childhood and brought up among them; she was a separatist, and would refuse to translate any parts of his sermons of which she disapproved. There was an Indian day-school in Stockbridge, kept by Deacon Woodbridge; and there was also a boarding school. The latter was maintained by a benevolent English clergyman of the name of Hollis, who for some reason or other had become interested in the salvation of American savages; he sent across an annual donation for the school, and this donation had for twelve years been filling the pockets of Captain Kellogg; Captain Kellogg was a military man from Connecticut; according to Edwards he was illiterate, lame, and over sixty years of age, but he had been cunning enough to capture Mr. Hollis's bounty, and he clung to it with true New England tenacity. The Indian boys who came to his school were very rarely taught anything; they were not even clothed or disciplined; when he was at home he used them to work his farm; when he was away—and he had been away all through the French and Indian war, and for long periods afterwards—they ran wild. Stockbridge was three days' journey from Boston, and Boston was two months' voyage from London, so there was little danger that the benevolent Mr. Hollis would ever learn that his seminary of pious Indian boys, an oasis in a wilderness of savages, was all a dream.

In 1751 the Indian tribes were showing a new willingness to learn English customs and religion; some of the Iroquois had moved to Stockbridge from the Mohawk Valley west of Albany. If the opportunity was used they would be bound forever to the British crown; but ill-treatment would throw them into the arms of the French. The British and colonial governments saw their chance, and promised subsidies, partly in direct payment to the Indians, partly for their education; at the same time two allied missionary societies in London and Boston, and several generous individuals, agreed to pay out large sums. The expenditure of almost all this money would be managed from Stockbridge.

Edwards knew that his position would be no sinecure. The chief inhabitant of Stockbridge was Colonel Ephraim Williams, uncle of Israel, Elisha, and Solomon; that fact alone was enough to make him a bitter enemy; and he had in addition certain reasons of his own for finding Edwards's proximity undesirable. He was engaged in amassing a fortune by defrauding the Indians and the Colonial government, partly by trading, partly by annexing land, and partly by having the management of government business; by this means he had succeeded in making himself very heartily hated by the Indians, the other white inhabitants, and, in particular, Deacon Woodbridge; but his family connections prevented him from being exposed, and he was now hoping that the subsidies paid to the Indian tribes would pass through his hands. The previous missionary, John Sergeant, had been the husband of his daughter Abigail.

Woodbridge saw in Edwards a valuable ally; but some of the other English people were less enthusiastic about the appointment, and, it must be confessed, not without reason. One of them exclaimed, "How unsuitable a person is Mr. Edwards on almost every account for this business!" "Can't the commissioners," he said, "be led to think it of the last importance that a gentleman should be young in order to be soon expert in the language; should be of a generous, catholic spirit, not only to recommend himself and mission to the prince and others abroad, but to do forty times as much good at home." "Mr. Hopkins of Springfield is far from thinking his brother-in-law proper to come here. He freely told Mr. Woodbridge so. But he can get the Indians to say just what he bids them, and their humble petition with his earnest desire will be sufficient for the purpose."

Edwards, however, was supported by the commissioners of the Boston missionary society, who had absolute confidence in him. He also made himself acquainted with General Pepperell, now a baronet and resting on his Louisburg laurels at his estate in Maine; Edwards visited him there, and afterwards wrote a very long-winded and somewhat pompous letter of condolence to Lady Pepperell, who had recently lost her son. But what gave Edwards more confidence still was the admiration of Brigadier-General Joseph Dwight, a cousin of Joseph Hawley and a resident of Brookfield, who was interested in Indian affairs; Dwight had commanded the artillery at Louisburg, amid universal admiration, and was a very dignified and respected gentleman; the eulogies of him which have survived into the twentieth century all agree that the most remarkable of his many remarkable virtues was his veracity; he was a justice of the county court and an earnest Puritan; and he declared that Mr. Edwards was the best minister in all New England.

So Edwards brought his family to Stockbridge and built himself a house. Warned by Sergeant's experience, he made no attempt to learn the language of the Indians; but he preached simple sermons explaining the rudiments of Christianity, which the interpreter translated; and in the quiet of the beautiful little town he hoped to resume his studies and confute the liberals. "My wife and children are well-pleased with our present situation," he told his father in 1752; "they like the place much better than they expected. Here, at present, we live in peace; which has of long time been an unusual thing with us. The Indians seem much pleased with my family, especially my wife." The Indians had a regrettable tendency to get drunk, and none of them appear to have been converted by Edwards's preachings; but they were more docile than the rough campaigners from Louisburg.

He visited the schools and devised schemes for better education. The Indian boys, he discovered, were taught to read out of English books, without being taught the English language; "they merely learn to make such and such sounds, on the sight of such and such marks, but know not the meaning of the words, and so have neither profit nor pleasure in reading;" it was imperative that they learn the English language, especially as their own was "very unfit to express moral and divine things." Whether this remarkable method of educating them was used by Captain Kellogg or Deacon Woodbridge, or both, is not recorded.

In a long epistle to Sir William Pepperell Edwards devised a syllabus for the Indian schools. A universal error, in English as well as in Indian schools, was that children were made to learn without being made to understand; but if the child were taught to understand things as well as words, his lesson would cease to be a dull wearisome task. They ought also to be taught to spell correctly, girls as well as boys: Edwards was always a fanatic about this; he told one of his sons that he hated bad spelling more than anything short of actual immorality. Another excellent method of civilizing the Indians would be to teach them to sing. At regular periods there should be public examinations, similar to college commencements, and prizes should be awarded. These excellent ideas are somewhat marred, to the modern reader, by the predominantly Biblical character of the instruction to be imparted; thus history, to Edwards, consisted mainly of the chronology of the Old Testament; while, by the "main things in Geography," he meant such facts as the relative positions of Jerusalem, Babylon, and Padan Aram.

By this time the Iroquois were growing disillusioned with the scholastic methods of Captain Kellogg. But after a conference at Albany, which Edwards attended, they consented to undergo instruction a while longer. The Boston missionary society withdrew support from Captain Kellogg, and appointed Gideon Hawley as his successor; and plans were made for a female boarding school also. Edwards insisted that competent trustees be appointed; and who should be more suitable for such a position than Brigadier-General Dwight? Overjoyed by the nomination, General Dwight settled in Stockbridge, in order that he might sit at the feet of his favorite minister.

Edwards began work on his confutation of the liberals, and looked forward to years of peaceful study; but the ways of God were once more inscrutable.

Elisha Williams was now in London: he had finished his political business; and, having had news from Connecticut that his wife was dead, had married his English poetess. The English dissenters admired him tremendously; they elected him to the governing board of the missionary society, and, on his nomination, they elected also his uncle, Ephraim Williams of Stockbridge; when the news came that a female boarding school was to be started, they appointed as its mistress Ephraim's daughter, Abigail Sergeant. Worse was to follow: General Dwight fell in love with Mrs. Sergeant, married her, and was converted by her father into a bitter enemy of Edwards. The new allies, Williams and Dwight, planned to get their hands on all the money which was flowing through Stockbridge from London and Boston and to expel any impartial observer, such as Edwards, who might expose their activities. The female school was theirs: Mrs. Dwight was its mistress, her husband was the trustee who examined her accounts, and her father and her cousin were on the governing board of commissioners. As for the male school, their plan was to oust Hawley and replace him by Dwight's eldest son; meanwhile they came to terms with Captain Kellogg, who was still pocketing Mr. Hollis's bounty, and planned that he should do as much harm as possible to Hawley. Kellogg refused at first to surrender his pupils; he then started a rival school, and tried to attract the Indians by offering them free clothing. Later on Hawley's school was mysteriously burnt down.

The Indians, however, knew Captain Kellogg, and they knew Ephraim Williams; they threatened to go away if Hawley were dismissed. Soon afterwards another of the Williams faction visited Hawley's school, and struck the son of a chief on the head with a cane, out of sheer brutality; the Mohawks decided to leave at once, but the offender gave them money to induce them to stay. When Dwight learned what had happened, he was furious; but he laid all the blame on Hawley; he at once marched down to the school, and cursed him in front of his pupils for three hours.

Obviously the position was absurd: the interests of Great Britain and the plans of the missionary societies were being betrayed by a small family clique. All the other authorities were hundreds of miles away, and Edwards was the only man on the spot who was capable of checking it. Without attributing to him any unforgiving spirit, one can at least suppose that he was not the less ready to take up the cudgels because it was the same family clique that had recently ejected him from Northampton.

In a series of letters to officials in Boston Edwards set forth, with his usual cogency, his view of the situation. Dwight, he said, "has plainly discovered many designs, tending to bring more money into his own pocket;" he and his son were to receive Mr. Hollis's annual gift for the male boarding school; he was to supply the boarding schools out of his own shop, and send in his bills to the British government; the British subsidy to the Iroquois was to be managed from Stockbridge instead of from New York; his wife was to have charge of the female boarding school; four of their children were to have a free education in the boarding school; another member of the family was to be employed as usher; his personal servants were to be paid out of missionary funds; the boarding school was to be placed on his wife's land, which he was then to sell to the government at an exorbitant rate; and, with all these advantages, he would be able to monopolize the trade with the Indians. Dwight being the only active trustee, and the Williams family being so strongly represented among the commissioners, there would be no possibility of preventing fraud; and the schools would be managed precisely as the family chose. The Mohawks would all go away, unless they were induced to remain by bribes from the government.

When Dwight and the Williams clique discovered what Edwards was doing, they were furious, and planned at once to have him dismissed. Dwight rode down to Boston, and explained to all his influential friends that their new missionary was a stiffnecked bigot who would drive all the Indians away; but Edwards had private warnings of what was happening, and wrote in his own defense; the Boston missionary society stood by him.

Meanwhile Elisha Williams had disappeared. He had set sail from England in the fall of 1751; his ship was blown hundreds of miles out of her course, found herself among the West Indian islands, and narrowly escaped shipwreck on a reef near Antigua. Elisha and his bride were compelled to winter there; they came hurrying back to Connecticut in the spring. He was informed by his relatives that Edwards was giving trouble again; he was objecting, apparently out of sheer personal animosity against anybody connected with the Williams family, to the appointment of Abigail as schoolmistress; yet, than the wife of a former missionary, who could be more suitable? Elisha, it is probable, did not know quite so much about his relatives as Edwards did. He rode over to Stockbridge, and, as a commissioner of the London society, claimed full power to ask questions and settle disputes; he added that he would be sorry if he had to give the London society bad reports of their new missionary. Edwards would not meet him, except by the medium of pen and paper; he refused to acknowledge that Elisha had any power, acting singly, to interfere, and demanded a committee of inquiry.

The next move by the Williams family showed that they were desperate. Edwards had the support of the other white inhabitants of Stockbridge, who would be ready, if necessary, to bear witness in his favor. So old Ephraim Williams planned to oust them; he got up very early one morning, before sunrise, and hurried all round the town calling the inhabitants out of their beds and offering to buy their farms; he offered high prices and cash down, and insisted that bargains should be closed and papers signed immediately. One farmer did actually sell his land; but before Williams had finished, Stockbridge realized what was afoot; and the scheme was baffled. "Then," adds Edwards, "his friends, and he himself, too, were glad to lay this conduct to *distraction.*"

In the autumn there was a grand attempt by all the Williamses to have Edwards ejected. Dwight enlisted in the party his old commander, Sir William Pepperell, who had not, apparently, been impressed by Edwards's letter of condolence and his scheme for teaching the Indian children the relative positions of Jerusalem, Babylon and Padan Aram; and in his report to the General Court, as trustee of the Indian schools, Dwight complained that Edwards was a most incompetent missionary, who was too old to learn the Indian language. Edwards, however, was able to quote, with damning effect, from the letters written by Dwight in the days when he thought him the best minister in New England; and the Boston Missionary Society continued to have every confidence in him. The Williams party was completely defeated; Edwards's expulsion from Northampton was avenged, and the interests of the British crown and of the Protestant religion were safeguarded. It was just in time, for most of the Mohawks had already left Stockbridge, and the remainder were preparing to follow them; but they were persuaded to return the following spring, and give the boarding school one more trial. A year later Mr. Hollis made Edwards the trustee of his annual donation to the boarding school; his ardor for the salvation of the savages was still unquenched, in spite of his discovery that he had been pouring money for twenty years into the pockets of an illiterate Connecticut military man.

The confidence which everybody had in Edwards's integrity was certainly remarkable. How it looked to the enemy can be gauged from a letter written later in the year by an adherent of the Williams party: "Mr. Edwards and his abetters," he said, "by these deep-concerted schemes, have induced Mr. Hollis to submit himself with his whole charity and yearly donations into the hands of Mr. Edwards, to be disposed of entirely agreeable to the judgment and humor of his own mind."

The "distracted" Ephraim retired to Deerfield and died soon after; his wealth went eventually, through his son, to the founding of Williams College. Next year Elisha developed a tumor on his chin, neglected it, and followed his uncle into the next world. Captain Kellogg retired to Connecticut. General Dwight lived in Stockbridge for a few years longer, still dignified, respected, and applauded for his "veracity;" but, finding the proximity of Edwards finally unbearable, he retired to Great Barrington; in the year 1761 one finds him buying, for Joseph Hawley of Northampton, a Bible, the works of the celebrated theologian Flavel, and six copies of "Divine Breathings." His wife, the former Abigail Sergeant, outlived him into an old age even more dignified and respected; as "Madam

Dwight," she seemed to the young people of the free and independent state of Massachusetts like a relic from a hardier and more virtuous era.

Edwards was left victorious on the field, and for a brief period he had rest. But the trials of controversy were soon followed by those of foreign war.

# CHAPTER XVI

## THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR

THE last and sternest conflict for North America was beginning. The French were pressing southward from Canada into the valley of the Ohio, winning over the Indians and hoping to confine the English to the east of the mountains. In 1754 a young Virginian named Washington began the war with a skirmish at Great Meadows. The Indians took the warpath again, and farmers along the frontiers of New England could no longer gather their harvests in safety. The Iroquois, who had been the allies of Great Britain for a century, threatened to go over to the French unless the war was prosecuted vigorously; and, in Edwards's opinion, their example would be followed by that of all the Indians in North America, including his own parishioners at Stockbridge.

His position was terribly exposed; it was only too easy for raiders to come down the valley and put an end to the mission and all its inhabitants; Pittsfield a few miles farther north had been abandoned. "What will become of us, in the struggles that are coming on, God only knows," he told one of his Scottish correspondents. The English behaved towards the Indians with their usual stupidity. Two men stole a horse and were pursued by an Indian; they shot him and then beat him to death; the authorities arrested them and sent them to Springfield to be tried; one was given a mild sentence for manslaughter, and the other completely acquitted. Soon afterwards, while most of Stockbridge was listening to Edwards at meeting, somebody passed the Chamberlain homestead on the hill; he saw an Indian dragging something along the ground, and, supposing that one of the Stockbridge Indians was thieving, he went nearer; the Indian turned out to be a stranger, and the something a baby; the Indian promptly tomahawked the baby and fled; inside the house was another Indian with another baby, and on the ground the hired servant, mortally wounded in an effort to defend Mrs. Chamberlain; the second baby had his brains dashed out against the mantelpiece, and the second Indian fled; Mr. Chamberlain was skulking in an inner room with two more children, and jumped out of the window in terror as soon as the door opened. The flying Indians killed their fourth victim on their way home. The alarm was given at once. Many of the white inhabitants fled to Great Barrington, including most of the Dwight-Sergeant family, one of whom actually went barefoot. Soldiers flocked into Stockbridge from all sides; the town was prepared for defense, and a fort was built round Edwards's house. The raid, however, was not repeated, and the soldiers proved more embarrassing than useful; they were billeted upon the inhabitants; they accused Edwards's parishioners of the crime, and wished to anticipate events by treating them as enemies; and, to earn the reward for Indian scalps, two of them dug up and scalped a buried Stockbridge Indian.

Edwards refused to leave his people, although to the anxieties of war were added those of sickness and poverty. During the last six months of 1754 he had a series of fits of the ague, which reduced him to a skeleton and made him unable to hold a pen; and when the fits finally left him, he was so weak that he was afraid of the dropsy. His own illness, an illness which had nearly killed his wife a year or two before, and the expenses of sending his son Timothy to Princeton seriously taxed his slender resources; and he was compelled to plead with the commanding officer that no more soldiers might be billeted upon him, and to send petitions to the General Court of Massachusetts for financial assistance.

The next year was considered critical, and four separate expeditions were planned by the British government. Winslow raided Nova Scotia and brought back to New England the ill-fated Acadians, commemorated in "Evangeline." Governor Shirley set out to take Niagara, but got no farther than the British fort at Oswego; his raid fizzled out into nothing, and with it Shirley's military reputation. Braddock landed in Virginia, and marched by slow stages against the French fort on the site of Pittsburg; he was ambushed at the ford of the Monongahela, and he and his redcoats were shot down by columns. The last of the four expeditions was the least unsuccessful. Three or four thousand men were recruited in New England and sent up from Albany against Crown Point under the command of William Johnson, a young Irishman who lived up the Mohawk Valley, kept a number of Mohawk mistresses, and had more influence over the Indians than anybody else in America.

Israel Williams stayed at Hatfield to superintend the defense of the frontiers, and by his arrogance and nepotism he bitterly offended Joseph Hawley. But Seth Pomeroy and Elisha Hawley commanded companies in the Crown Point expedition, and the colonel of their regiment was Ephraim Williams, son of Edwards's enemy at Stockbridge. Ephraim junior was a close ally of Israel, who had employed him as his agent with the Governor and the General Court in Boston; legend declares that he proposed to, and was rejected by, Israel's daughter; family influence had won him promotion more quickly than his talents deserved, and he repaid the debt by giving positions in his regiment to six near relations; nevertheless, in retrospect, he is the most attractive of his family; before he left Albany he asked Israel to compensate the Stockbridge Indians for the wrongs his father had done them, and he made a will leaving the bulk of his fortune for the founding of a school in Williamstown.

The expedition proceeded up the Hudson Valley, and with it went three hundred of the Mohawks to whom Edwards had preached at Stockbridge. The New Englanders attended prayers morning and evening, and heard sermons every Sabbath. A soldier convicted of cursing, swearing, and attempted sodomy was given one hundred stripes and drummed out of the army with a rope round his neck; on the other hand when fifty men deserted because their rum ration was insufficient they were merely asked to return. Johnson's sexual morals were no bar to popularity; his officers observed with delight that he neither cursed nor swore, and one of them wrote home that he was a second Marlborough. In September they reached Lake George; here they clashed with the French. A scouting party led by Ephraim Williams fell into an ambush; the rearguard fled in terror, and the front ranks were annihilated, Ephraim Williams and Elisha Hawley being among the killed; but the main body retreated in good order, pausing now and then to pour a volley into the advancing French, who dropped like pigeons. The main British army lay behind a rude entrenchment of logs and wagons; the French approached through the woods, and soon their bayonets could be seen glittering among the leaves like a row of icicles on a January morning. For four hours, from noon to late afternoon, the New Englanders repulsed wave after wave of French attacks; then the enemy wavered, and with a shout they leapt over their entrenchments and fell upon them with the butt-ends of their muskets. The French general was captured, and his men driven back to Crown Point. Seth Pomeroy considered it the greatest battle that had ever been fought on American soil. However, there could be no farther advance that year, and Crown Point was still a French stronghold; the New Englanders settled down into winter quarters at Fort William Henry, on the shore of Lake George.

Edwards, from his home on the frontier, watched these events with the most careful attention; not because, if the British were defeated, he and his family might be scalped —he was supremely indifferent to his personal safety— but in order to discern the purposes of God's Providence. From the beginning he was pessimistic: he considered it "the most critical season, with the British dominions in America, that ever was seen, since the first settlement of the colonies;" and in April, three months before Braddock's defeat, he was prophesying disaster. At the end of the year he wrote that "our cause is no better, but far worse, than it was in the beginning of the year;" the victory on Lake George did not console him; the English ought to have taken Crown Point, and would have done so if the captured French general had not been so wicked as to tell them a lie (Edwards was sometimes astonishingly naïve). Great Britain, in his opinion, should send out arms, money, and shipping, but no troops or officers; "all the Provinces in America seem to be fully sensible," he said, "that New England men are the only men to be employed against Canada." "However," he added piously, and with a reversion, very unusual in him, to the ideas of his ancestors, "we ought to remember that neither New England men, nor any other, are any thing, unless God be with us; and when we have done all, at finding fault with men and instruments employed, we cannot expect prosperity, unless the accursed thing be removed from our camp."

These frowns of the Almighty were very perplexing. His own troubles did not disturb him; his hired man died, and his daughter fell seriously ill; but God had His own reasons for chastening even the most faithful of His servants. The defeats of the Protestant cause were harder to explain. There were worldly reasons for them in plenty; when his Scotch friends pointed out that there were many more Englishmen in America than there were Frenchmen, Edwards was able to explain the defeats of his countrymen as lucidly and convincingly as an *ex postfacto* historian. But God's ways were very mysterious; he could no longer believe that the Millennium was close at hand, and that God's favoring the English, in spite of their manifest wickedness, proved that He had many of His elect among them, who would be converted shortly. Many divines, he said, "have been over forward to fix the times and seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." He was inclined now to prophesy Christ's second coming for 1867 or even for the twentieth century.

Meanwhile he was in imminent personal danger. In September there were threats of an Indian raid, and, at the request of his parishioners, Edwards had to swallow his pride and write to Israel Williams to ask for protection. Most of the white inhabitants departed; and Bellamy urged the Edwardses to take refuge with him at Bethlem and treat his house as their home; but Edwards clung to Stockbridge and was perhaps grateful to Providence for increasing his leisure and thereby enabling him to confute the liberals. In 1756 his daughter Esther visited him with her little son and daughter. She had married President Burr of Princeton, where her life was one endless round of doctoring her husband, mothering his students, and giving tea-parties to ministers, five and ten at a time. But if she hoped for a holiday at Stockbridge she was sadly mistaken. All that summer there were repeated alarms, and all the Indians would run for shelter to the fort round Edwards's house; there was not a soldier in the place. "Ten Indians," she told her friend Miss Sally Prince of Boston, "might with all ease distroy us intirely," and she was so terrified that night after night she could not get a wink of sleep. "I want to be made willing to die in any way God pleases," she said, "but I am not willing to be Buchered by a barbarous enemy." She decided to go home sooner than she had intended, but Edwards refused to be more anxious about his daughter's safety than about his own; he was "not willing to hear one word about it," she complained; "if the Indians get me," she concluded, "they get me, that is all I can say, but 'tis my duty to make myself as easy as I can."

The year 1756 was a bad one for the British arms. London sent out three new commanders-in-chief in succession, and the last did not arrive until the campaigning season was almost over. The French captured Oswego and hoped to win over all the Indians. The New Englanders on Lake George almost mutinied when an order arrived that no colonial officers should rank above captains of the regular army. In Fort William Henry outhouses, kitchens, graves, and abattoirs were all jumbled together; according to a British officer the men were indolent and dirty, and there were no pickets or scouts; nearly the whole army was sick. That year they made no attempt to take Crown Point; and in the winter they were attacked by smallpox.

The year 1757 was even worse. The Marquis of Montcalm came down from Canada with six thousand Frenchmen and a motley array of Indians from a dozen different tribes, some of them from beyond the Mississippi and speaking unintelligible dialects. In August Fort William Henry surrendered, and the Indians massacred all the sick. New England was in grave danger; all the troops in western Massachusetts hurried to Albany to check Montcalm as he descended the valley, and the frontiers were left open to Indian raids. Sir William Pepperell came to Springfield to improvise a defense; and he gave orders that if the enemy advanced, every wagon west of the Connecticut River must be destroyed, and all horses and food removed to the east bank. Fortunately Montcalm advanced no farther; a fortnight later the militia came back from Albany; the call had been too urgent for them to make adequate preparations, and their route homewards was strewn with graves and hospitals.

Next year the tide was turned by Pitt's accession to power; but Edwards did not live to see it. All through these alarums and excursions he stayed in Stockbridge; and when he was given an opportunity for a permanent move he was most unwilling to take it. Events afterwards showed that in his unwillingness he was strangely prescient.

# CHAPTER XVII

## THE BATTLE WITH LIBERALISM

CONTROVERSY, sickness, poverty, and war might well have kept Edwards at Stockbridge fully occupied. As a matter of fact it was the most fruitful period of his life.

He had been planning for many years to confute the liberals. They had greatly increased since the awakening, and occupied some of the most influential pulpits in Boston and eastern Massachusetts. The young men were all opposed to the old Calvinism; they took the greatest delight in scoffing at the beliefs of their forefathers, and could scarcely begin a sermon without a few preliminary gibes about bigotry and superstition. Charles Chauncy, formerly the chief enemy of the Great Awakening, was already forming the opinion that hellfire was not eternal, and all humanity would ultimately be saved; he did not, however, have the courage to publish his ideas until after the Revolution, and then only in England and not under his own name. Jonathan Mayhew, a very aggressive and impudent young man, was pastor of the West Church; he was almost a Unitarian; he declared that religion was merely the science of good living; and he gloried in the horror and enmity of his older colleagues. In prosperous and well-fed Boston rationalism was an inevitable growth; only fishermen and farmers, dependent on the elements, are naturally superstitious; and to Brahmin merchants and lawyers the ecstasies of mysticism were only a form of lunacy.

Edwards observed, with much truth, that "these modern fashionable opinions, however called noble and liberal, are commonly attended, not only with a haughty contempt, but an inward malignant bitterness of heart, towards all the zealous professors of the contrary spiritual principles." "I have known many gentlemen (especially in the ministry)," he continued, "tainted with these liberal principles; who, though none seem to be such warm advocates as they, for liberty and freedom of thought, . . . yet, in the course of things, have made it manifest, that they themselves had no small share of a persecuting spirit."

The liberals attacked the old Calvinism in two directions: they declared that the human will was free, and that God was benevolent.

In maintaining free will, they did not merely reject the determinism of Calvin, they also threatened the whole structure of traditional Christianity; for they said that to be religious meant to live a sober respectable life, such as was in the power of every human being; justification by faith, conversion, supernatural grace, and the beatific vision were mere relics of Gothic barbarism. Obviously, ministers who said that the pathway to prosperity in this world was also the pathway to heaven in the next would be much liked by Boston merchants.

God's benevolence was even more often open to criticism. To a Bostonian, born to a prosperous life in a counting house, supervising the transportation of slaves to Jamaica and rum to the Guinea Coast, the notion was plausible enough. But to anybody in closer contact with danger it was obvious that, whatever else God might be, He was certainly not benevolent; Chauncy and Mayhew were attributing to the Deity qualities which they thought He ought to have, instead of those which He actually did have. And this false view of the universe, which was common at that period in London and Paris as well as in Boston, produced a sentimental outlook, blinded people's eyes to reality, and is perhaps the chief ingredient in the phenomenon which is called "Victorianism."

The absurdity of this doctrine is very adequately demonstrated in Chauncy's essay on "The Benevolence of the Deity." God's predominant motive, said Chauncy, was a desire to make His creatures happy. But obviously large numbers of His creatures were not happy: instead, however, of blaming God for His failure, we ought to assume that He had done the best He could; He had chosen, rightly or wrongly—and since He knew more about it than we did, we must assume that He had chosen rightly—to work by general laws, which naturally caused hardship in particular cases; and this, of course, God could not prevent. Most of the pains man suffered were warnings to keep him good. It was true that some men would go to hell, and could hardly be said to derive benefit from it, since they were to remain there eternally (Chauncy was not yet a Universalist); but this was one of those occasions where general laws caused hardships to particular individuals; sufferers in hell must take comfort from the fact that they were suffering in order that God might be benevolent by general laws to their fellow creatures.

Captious critics might be unable to see the workings of benevolence in nature. Some parts of the world, for example, had too much sunshine, and others too little; but here again we must assume that God had done the best He could; and certainly "the kindness of the Deity has adjusted this inconvenience, as well as the nature of things would permit;" for he had provided fur for animals, and firewood for man; while in the tropical regions he had arranged that sea breezes should blow. Another possible criticism of the world which God had provided for us was that there was too much water in it; but "had the surface of this globe been all dry land, none of those animated kinds, in their numberless individuals, could have had existence, whose proper element is water;" God would then have had no amphibians, fishes or crustaceans to whom He could show benevolence.

Another objection sometimes made against God's plan was that animals lived by eating each other. Probably, however, but for this expedient, God would not have been able to make nearly as many of them to enjoy His benevolence; as it was, He had wisely arranged for them to be "useful to one another;" and "several of the lower kinds are serviceable to the superior." After all, this was probably the best world possible under the circumstances, or at least we should give God the benefit of the doubt; and if the sufferings of animals were a serious difficulty, we could probably suppose that they would have a future life, to atone for their misery in this one. God was benevolent to animals as well as to men; in fact His "preserving providence . . . extends even to vegetables."

This treatise, unfortunately, though written in the 'fifties, was not published until long after Edwards's death. His comments on God's benevolence in sending men to hell and in making the animals and the vegetables "useful to one another" would have been entertaining. But he had already met similar ideas in the writings of English liberal theologians. He proceeded to demolish them in an essay on "Original Sin:" man, he maintained, was wicked, and his sufferings could only be explained by the supposition that God was angry with him. To anyone who had seen infant-children die in the agonies of throat distemper, and who was himself in real danger of either perishing of starvation or being scalped by Indians, it was lunacy to describe God as benevolent. Moreover, the whole structure of Christianity would be overthrown by such a doctrine: if God's predominant trait was benevolence, then He was not angry with man, man was not a sinner, the atonement was unnecessary, and Jesus Christ was not the Son of God who died for the sins of humanity but a mere teacher of moral virtue.

Edwards was therefore defending Christianity rather than Calvinism. The inferiorities of Calvinism to other kinds of Christianity—the refusal to distinguish between the will and the lower emotions, the terrible narrowness of its moral ideal, the doctrine that every act, word or thought of a godless man was sinful—had not been exposed; Edwards accepted them without question.

His other controversial work was "The Freedom of the Will," written in four and a half months in the spring of 1753. This is a masterpiece of subtle argument, written in a serene self-confident style which makes liberalism appear ridiculous as well as illogical. Everything, says Edwards, must have a cause, acts of the will included; to say that man has free will is to say that he is free to choose what he chooses, which is absurd. The argument is irrefutable; but as Edwards expressly identifies the will with the emotions, it remains rather a tour de force.

He then answered the theological objections to determinism, and set out to prove it not unjust (in his own words) that a man "should be made to fry in hell to all eternity for those things which he had no power to avoid, and was under a fatal, unfrustable, invincible necessity of doing." Badness, he argued, consisted in being bad; and moral necessity was no excuse for it; if a man's heart was wicked, then he deserved punishment. Once this was admitted, then determinism became an invigorating creed; it was liberalism which sapped moral effort, because it encouraged men to excuse themselves for sinning, on the ground that they could not help it.

Certainly Calvinism has always produced energetic characters; it is only the misunderstanding of its enemies that makes it seem to undermine human endeavor. For man's endeavors were themselves part of the chain of determinism; what Calvinism asserted was that those endeavors had causes beyond the individual who made them, not that endeavors could not alter the sequence of events.

The other objection to determinism was that it made God the author of sin; if everything had a cause, and the first cause was God, then where did sin come from? Edwards answered that sin was negative; it was the absence of God which caused sin, in the same way as the sun caused darkness—by withdrawing itself. Thus his own meditations, wholly without external prompting, had brought him back to the old doctrine of St. Augustine and St. Thomas and the Mediaeval Church. To a scholar and a mystic it was easy to believe that sin was negative; sin consisted in those carnal temptations and that physical weakness which prevented him from realizing his moral ideal; it did not occur to him that other people might want to live a life as passionately devoted to worldly ambition or the cultivation of the senses as his own was passionately spiritual.

Edwards also wrote, while he was at Stockbridge, essays on "The Nature of True Virtue" and on "The End for which God created the World." To be truly virtuous, he said, was to love being and desire its happiness; the more of being anything had, the more worthy it was of love. Hence God, who was infinite being, was infinitely more worthy of love than any of His creatures; God therefore loved Himself, and had made the world to express His own glory. These ideas can be found in embryo in the Notes on the Mind which Edwards wrote as an undergraduate, and in the justification of hellfire which he preached at Northampton.

The principle that virtue meant benevolence to being became, historically, very important: Edwards's disciples emphasized the fact that men had being as well as God, and made this doctrine a basis for missionary and humanitarian enterprises; in the outcome they tended to forget about God altogether, or to accept Chauncy's theory that God's chief trait was not love to Himself but benevolence to mankind. Seventy years later a prominent supporter of General Jackson even declared that Edwards's philosophy was the foundation of the Democratic party.

No man, however, should be judged by his disciples. Edwards himself presents a different and more fascinating problem. His theology was as plausible, consistent, and logical as an attempt to explain the universe could be; but if it satisfies the intellect it disgusts the reason. A large majority of God's creatures were to spend eternity in hell. God was at once everywhere and in some places only; He was the one all-pervading substance expressing Himself through history, and He was the Jehovah who judged the wicked;

He was the whole universe, and He was a part of it which condemned the other part; He was "where every devil is, and where every damned soul is," for "He upholds them in being," yet He was the sun who, by withdrawing His light from human hearts, made men worthy of damnation. Edwards does not betray the slightest sign of being bewildered by this mystery. To the observer he seems utterly lost on these snowy peaks; but he presses forward in perfect confidence that he knows his way.

He was planning now to write his magnum opus, a "History of the Work of Redemption;" this was to be a complete history of the universe, from the creation to the last judgment. The conception was sublime: it was to show how the universe began with God and would end with God; time was a stream, and as it began in God, so God was the infinite ocean into which it would empty itself; history was a mighty wheel, and when it had revolved through time, it would return to the God from whom it started. Unfortunately, the fragments actually written are exceedingly tedious; they are divided into three parts, the first a paraphrase of Old Testament history, the second a paraphrase of the Gospels, and the third a history of the world since the crucifixion; the history of the world since the crucifixion is based mostly on the Book of Revelation.

In September, 1757, Edwards's son-in-law, President Burr of Princeton, died of a fever: his health had been destroyed by nine years of preaching, lecturing, arguing with the state legislature, ingratiating himself with the state governor, entertaining ministers at tea-parties, leading revivals among the students, and persuading rich men that Princeton needed money. Two days later Edwards was elected to succeed him.

The news was as unpleasant as it was surprising. Edwards enjoyed his life at Stockbridge; the Indians were docile parishioners; the woods and lakes of the Housatonnuck Valley were quiet and beautiful; he was planning more confutations of liberalism; he wished to finish his "Work of Redemption;" he thought that he was not sufficiently learned in mathematics and in Greek; he felt himself wholly unsuited to govern a college; and he shrank from the labor and expense of removing to New Jersey. "I think I can write better than I can speak," he told the governors of the college in a letter explaining all his misgivings.

Bellamy and Hopkins, however, urged him to accept; and a council of ministers met at Stockbridge and informed him that it was his duty to do so. Edwards burst into tears in the presence of the council and his own parishioners; and said afterwards that he could not understand how they had so easily surmounted his arguments against acceptance. However, he decided that he must obey a council; so in January he moved to Princeton, leaving his family behind him.

He was formally placed in the president's chair, began to preach every Sabbath in the college hall, and gave out questions in divinity, to be answered by the senior class at their leisure. These were the only duties which he performed. He told his daughters that he had been very much concerned and afraid about undertaking the presidency, but that since it appeared, as far as he could see, to be the will of God, he would cheerfully devote himself to it.

The smallpox was then raging in Princeton; on February 23rd Edwards was inoculated; his throat swelled up, so that he could not swallow; he developed a secondary fever; and on March 22nd, after sending his kindest love to his wife, and telling her that their union was, he trusted, spiritual, and would therefore continue forever, he died.

Mrs. Burr died, also of smallpox, a fortnight later; and the following September Mrs. Edwards was carried off by dysentery. Mrs. Burr left an infant son two years old; when his parents and grandparents had all been swept away in less than a year, there were many prayers for his welfare; as the son and grandson of college presidents and the descendant of many ministers, he was expected to do great things for God's church; and Bellamy planned to train him as a minister. The boy had been christened Aaron, after his father.

# EPILOGUE

## THE BLIGHT UPON POSTERITY

# EPILOGUE

## THE BLIGHT UPON POSTERITY

EDWARDS died apparently a failure. Nobody except Hawley wished him back in Northampton, the Stockbridge Indians were unconverted, Princeton was scarcely touched.

The advance of science continued. In 1752 Franklin discovered the true nature of lightning; and, in spite of clergymen who thought it blasphemous to control the instrument of God's wrath, lightning-rods were placed on the towers of meeting houses. One quiet moonlit night in 1755 there was another earthquake, the same earthquake which destroyed the city of Lisbon and inspired Voltaire to write "Candide." But the terror of 1728 was not repeated; no frantic mobs rushed into the meeting houses, no startled Bostonians thought that God was giving them special warning of the imminence of Judgment Day. Ministers the next Sabbath repeated the well-worn phrases; God was angry with New England and would destroy it; the Reverend Thomas Prince pointed out that no Protestant meeting house had been damaged in Lisbon, and drew the obvious moral. But the educated classes had learned much since 1728; Professor Winthrop of Harvard delivered and published two lectures explaining the true causes of earthquakes; Dr. Prince's conclusion, he said, showed "a narrow spirit of party"—a comment which marks an epoch in the progress of culture in New England.

Meanwhile wickedness increased. Separatism had made religion ridiculous; and the years from 1750 to the close of the War of Independence were beyond all comparison the most licentious that New England had ever known.

But when a man combines an absolute faith, a keen intellect, and a talent for making disciples, there follows, almost inevitably, a twist in the stream of history. Edwards left behind him, in Bellamy and Hopkins, two enthusiastic followers; and his writings, published and unpublished, were so much unexploded dynamite.

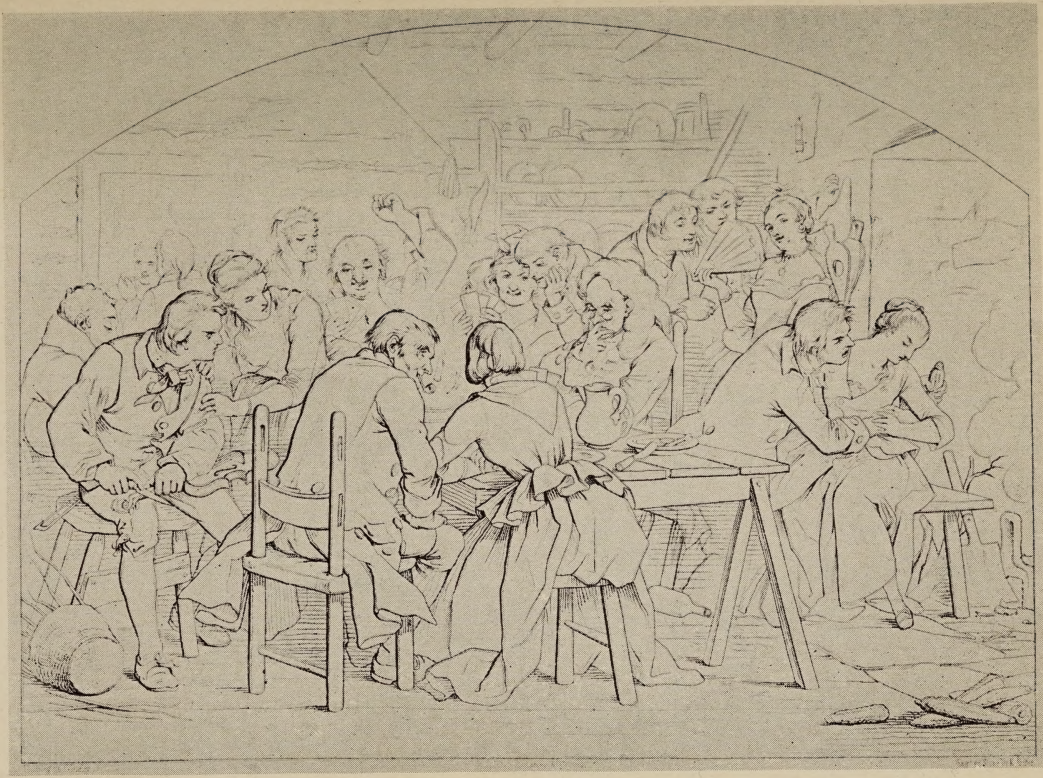
Bellamy and Hopkins devoted their lives to preaching and developing their master's doctrines. Like him they declared that man must be good because goodness was lovely, that goodness meant disinterested devotion to God, that the sin and misery in the world increased the virtue and happiness, that man must be converted if he was to escape hellfire, that conversions might be sudden and spasmodic as well as gradual, that a true Christianity showed itself in a strict morality, that the Half-Way Covenant was unchristian. With these doctrines they won over the young men; there were bitter controversies, with the conservatives as well as with the Unitarians; but by the end of the century the bulk of the Congregational clergy were with them, and the presidents of most of the theological schools were their disciples.

After the clergy the laity. The years from 1780 to 1850 were the great period of revivalism, when New England was for the first time Puritanized. Decade after decade, in rhythmic spasms, the Spirit of God breathed upon men's hearts, and those who apostatized after one revival were recaptured by the next; thanks to the "Treatise on the Religious Affections," the follies of separatism were not repeated. The extent of these movements was amazing; in one year alone, 1798, according to a Connecticut clergyman, one hundred and fifty parishes were swept by religion; seventy of them lay adjacent to each other and could all be seen from the top of a single hill. In the early years of the nineteenth century bundling died out, smoking became disgraceful in a woman and doubtful in a man, and the followers of Edwards launched the first crusade against strong drink.

Much of his posthumous influence Edwards could only have applauded. But from the beginning there was degeneracy. Edwards, after all, was a great man, and his moral code suited him perfectly; but in his followers it lacked the same justifications; immediately there was a hardening, a loss of poetry, an increase of formalism. Bellamy used mathematical tables to prove what in Edwards had been a poetic intuition, that the evil in the world had increased the goodness; he was more rigidly Puritanical; he thundered against dancing, and stated specifically, and in terrifying detail, that young people who danced would go to hell. Hopkins neither smoked nor drank; yet Edwards himself seems to have been a heavy smoker, and his beer-mug still survives to prove him no teetotaler. In their efforts to become saints after the pattern set by Edwards, the New Englanders became cold and unemotional; the old New England of beer-drinkings and barn-raisings died away; even the tears with which Edwards had mourned his daughter and his departure from Stockbridge became incredible; his more distant disciples were intolerant fanatics who hated nature and every natural and spontaneous impulse; a new refusal to look realities in the face became the mark of the Puritan.

Nor was his influence confined to New England. His disciples crossed the mountains into western New York and into the Western Reserve of Ohio; they swarmed into Michigan and Indiana; they spread themselves out across the prairies along the lonely trail to the Pacific. His books and his followers carried his doctrines into the Presbyterian churches of New Jersey and Pennsylvania; and thence, in ever-widening circles, into the Baptist and the Methodist churches.

Edwards was not the only begetter of modern Puritanism. The stream of his influence ran parallel with that of Gilbert Tennent and the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, with that of Bishop Asbury and the Methodists. But unquestionably he was the biggest intellect in the history of American Christianity; his presidency of Princeton made



(*From a drawing by F. O. C. Darley.*)

THE HUSKING BEE

him the doctor of the Presbyterian Church as well as of the Congregational; and Isaac Backus, the real founder of the American Baptist Church, was a convert of 1741. Without Edwards's intellectual justification Puritanism, north and south, would have been eaten away by the acids of science. It is hardly a hyperbole to say that, if Edwards had never lived, there would be to-day no blue laws, no societies for the suppression of vice, no Volstead act.

The moral, if there is a moral, seems to be that a great man should never have disciples. A genius, according to Emerson, is one who believes that what is true for him is true for all men. But, *ipso facto,* a genius is unlike other men; often he has a craving for the absolute which his disciples do not share; blown out of their true course by the impact of his personality, they imitate his actions, but they do not understand the spirit which motivates him. The New Englanders among whom Edwards came were a vigorous and attractive people, not because they were Calvinists but because there survived among them, strengthened by Old Testament example, so much of the traditional wisdom of humanity; their men farmed and fished and went to war like the patriarchs; their women were broad-bosomed mothers of many children; they were superstitious, but at least they were healthy. Then Edwards was born, with his passionate craving for life of a peculiar kind, with his passionate hatred of the human nature which clogged him. The people of Northampton, unjustly but perhaps more wisely than they realized, drove him from their town; but Stockbridge gave him a wider influence than ever he could have had in Northampton, and after his death his writings transformed half the people of New England from healthy human beings to would-be saints.

Yet to say that human beings do wisely to persecute their geniuses is perhaps a superficial conclusion. There was a discrepancy between Edwards's experience and his theology; his soul was naturally Christian, it was not naturally Calvinist; he accepted Calvinism with a certain hesitation, to which, if he had been a greater man, he would have paid more attention; and having accepted it, he accepted also without question its startling and terrible deficiencies. To have experienced those realities of human nature which are the foundation of Christianity, and yet to reject Calvinism, would have required, in a Connecticut schoolboy, in 1721, a wisdom almost superhuman; but because Edwards lacked that wisdom, his career is, in its hidden implications, the most tragic in American history.

To-day it is impossible to do him justice. But the dark stream of Calvinism is but a tributary to the flood of American culture; Edwards merely carried to its extreme a tendency brought from Europe; in spite of his patriotism he was not truly an American. As the flood rolls onward, and the tall towers rise across the land, and out of the death of the European is engendered that new thing for which the world is waiting, then Edwards, perhaps, will cease to be a living and baneful influence; he will become a figure in history. In Boston the Old North Meeting House is surrounded by dark-eyed Italian boys; in New Haven the meeting houses stand shoulder to shoulder across the green, while round them roar the street-cars and the automobiles; up the valley where the Connecticut still rolls seaward the meeting house towers rise white and immovable on their hilltops, while at their feet the Polish peasant-women cultivate tobacco. Into such a relic, a century hence, Edwards may perhaps have changed. Then posterity will be able to look back on him with admiration; they will say that his principle of disinterested devotion to God's will is identical with Spinoza's intellectual love of God; they will say that, alone among men, he believed life to be a battle, yet could look upon it and enjoy it as a spectacle; they will say that, in spite of errors, he came as near to achieving perfection in his own way as any human being can ever come.

THE END

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The description of New England life and religion is drawn from many sources—newspapers, pamphlets, sermons, town histories, church records, diaries, and letters—which in a book of this kind it is unnecessary to specify in detail. Thanks to the generosity of the University of Michigan in appointing me to a Lloyd Fellowship for the year 1929-30, I hope to publish shortly a study of New England Puritanism. As this biography is written for the general reader, I have made generalizations and guessed at motives and mental processes with more confidence than would be allowable in a work of scholarship.

Some of the material of this biography was used in an article on "New England in the Seventeen Thirties," published in "The New England Quarterly," 1930, July. Acknowledgments are also due to the editors of the "Quarterly" for allowing me to quote from the letter to Bellamy and from the diary of Esther Burr.

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